

蜘蛛の知虫

くも

ですぐにやぶる？

Kumo deruga
nanika?

馬場翁
あきひろ 馬場 巳之助





Kumo Desu ga, Nani ka?

Table of Contents

1. [S07The Duke's Daughter](#)
2. [051Knowing your opponent's strengths, isn't that wonderful?](#)
3. [052Tie them up and cut them down](#)
4. [053Bit by bit, I'm getting stronger!](#)
5. [054The struggle for sleep!](#)
6. [055The Hundred-Meter High Onslaught \(1\)](#)
7. [S08Skill Encyclopedia](#)
8. [056The Hundred-Meter High Onslaught \(2\)](#)
9. [057The Hundred-Meter High Onslaught \(3\)](#)
10. [058The Hundred-Meter High Onslaught \(4\)](#)
11. [059The Hundred-Meter High Onslaught \(5\)](#)
12. [060The Conclusion of the Hundred-Meter High Onslaught](#)
13. [S09Skill Points](#)
14. [061I'm evolving!!! \(part 2\)](#)
15. [062Poisonous Spider](#)
16. [063Miss... no, wait, M'lady Appraisal!!](#)
17. [064M'lady Appraisal, you really are quite brilliant.](#)
18. [065Pride](#)
19. [S10The Second Prince](#)
20. [066Skill Rush](#)
21. [067A new foe has appeared! His name: Detection!](#)
22. [068The End of the Lower Depths](#)
23. [069The Middle Strata of the Great Elro Labyrinth](#)
24. [070The Training Part](#)
25. [Y1The Hero and the King](#)
26. [071Leveling](#)
27. [072The Fruits of Leveling](#)
28. [073Suddenly, a death flag!](#)
29. [074Middle strata conquest: commence!](#)
30. [075There's things that are totally fine when you do them, but can't stand when people do to you, right?](#)
31. [S11Daughter of the Elves](#)

32. [076Turn up the heat!](#)
33. [077Unlucky number seven](#)
34. [078...What an amazing skill.](#)
35. [079What do you mean, I'm a spider full of sinister titles?](#)
36. [080Spider vs. Fire Drake \(1\)](#)
37. [S12The Academy](#)
38. [081Spider vs. Fire Drake \(2\)](#)
39. [082Spider vs. Fire Drake \(3\)](#)
40. [083Spider vs. Fire Drake \(4\)](#)
41. [084Spider vs. Fire Drake \(5\)](#)
42. [085Spider vs. Fire Drake, the Conclusion](#)
43. [S13The Saint and the Sword Emperor](#)
44. [086Victory Dance](#)
45. [087I'm evolving!!! \(part 3\)](#)
46. [088Zoa Ere](#)
47. [089Changing and Evolving](#)
48. [090Patience](#)
49. [K01The Pessimistic Daughter of the Duke](#)
50. [091Detection, you were a formidable foe.](#)
51. [092Once again I have cut a worthless object...](#)
52. [093That which crosses the strata](#)
53. [094I thought I was doing great, but I know I can do better.](#)
54. [095Superior species](#)
55. [S14Academy Life](#)
56. [096I think, therefore I am; I move, therefore I am; I am, and I am the I who I am, therefore I am.](#)
57. [097The Eight-Eyed One](#)
58. [098Look into my eyes!!](#)
59. [099That girl's an idiot, so I've got to be the responsible one.](#)
60. [100Huh? Lady Appraisal is...?](#)

S07The Duke's Daughter

I'm A Spider, So What? – S07

The Duke's Daughter

The Appraisal ceremony finished without a hitch, apart from that little commotion. It seems that what had everyone talking wasn't just the fact that Sue's stats and mine were both abnormally high. Thanks to my enhanced sense of hearing, I was able to eavesdrop a little on the nobles' discussions. It seems that skill points are normally only supposed to be granted when you level up, so starting with a hundred thousand at level one isn't normal at all. Sue, now that I think about it, has zero. I'd bet that this is because I've reincarnated, but what's interesting is that I keep overhearing that "the duke's daughter" also was born with skill points.

From what these nobles are saying, it sounds like the duke's daughter was Appraised a few days ago. They found that not only did she have phenomenally high stats, she also had skill points she wasn't supposed to. On top of that, they're saying that she also has the same skill with the strange, glitchy name that I do.

I come to a sudden realization: if what I'm hearing is correct, I absolutely must meet this daughter of a duke. My chance, luckily, arrived quickly.

After the Appraisal ceremony, we were led to a different assembly hall, where a small party was being held. Accompanied by the king, we went to meet a group of young nobles that had lined up in the center of the room. These children are generally around my age or slightly older; it seems that this is a way for the younger generation of the nobility to introduce themselves to each other. There, I got a chance to meet the duke's daughter.

"It is a great pleasure to meet you, my lord. I am the daughter of the Duke of Anabald, Carnatia Seli Anabald," she says.

She is beautiful, with bright red hair like a raging flame and a fierce face that

reveals her strong-willed disposition. Her presence captivates the attention with just a single glance. Not only that, I can see through my Mana Perception the huge mass of magical energy that billows around her. She has as much as Sue and I do.

The Duke of Anabald, incidentally, is among the country's most renowned members of the aristocracy. House Anabald has served the country for many generations, and their proud lineage has produced royalty and heroes. Every child born to the House of Anabald is supremely gifted, and their talents are finely honed by rigorous education so that they may be raised as the finest servants of their country.

Even so, the girl before me is abnormal. She seems to have already surpassed her father, the red-haired man who stands next to her.

"Greetings," I reply, "I am Slaine Zagan Analeicht. *Nice to meet you.*"

To test my realization from earlier, I said the last part in Japanese. For an instant, her eyes went wide, and I knew at once that I had been completely right.

"Father, may I speak with this girl?" I ask. "Eh?" replies the king.

He seems a little puzzled by my actions. The duke and his daughter, after all, were at the head of a long line of other children, brought in to meet me. However, I couldn't let this chance slip past me.

"Should I not?" "Hmm..."

The king glances at me, then at the duke, then at the other nobles still waiting in line, contemplating his options. Finally, he opens his mouth to speak.

"I don't mind. Don't be gone for too long. Come back in a little while." "Yes, Father. Thank you."

I grab the duke's daughter's hand and run off, like a little kid. Behind me, Sue started sulking incredibly, but I paid it no mind.

We left the assembly hall and found a private chamber off of the waiting room. Rooms such as these were set up near the assembly halls so that any nobles who needed to slip away to conduct private transactions could do so. This room is

tightly soundproofed, and a guard stationed at the door outside adds additional security. “Ahh, this’ll do,” I say, talking in Japanese now that I have nothing to hide.

“I would have never guessed that the prince would seriously be another reincarnated person!” says the duke’s daughter, also speaking in Japanese. “Oh maaan, it’s been so long since I heard Japanese coming out of another person’s mouth! I’m getting a little emotional here.” She still looks as strong-willed as ever, but her tone is light.

“So, I’d like to know... do you remember Heishin High?” I ask, referring to my old school.

“Holy crap, yeah! We’re seriously both from the same school and reincarnated in this world, huh?”

As I feared, this young woman was, just like me, caught up in that mysterious mid-air crack in the classroom and transported here; a former classmate.

“My old name was Shunsuke Yamada,” I say. “What was yours?” “Bwha?!” As soon as I say my old name, her eyes practically fly out of their sockets. “Ahahahahaha! H... hahaha! Y... you’re... Shun! Shun, a prince, haha, as fucking iiiif!”

The young woman lets out an enormous roar of laughter. What’s with this deja vu? The girl in front of me looks nothing like anyone I know, but this style of speech, these mannerisms, I remember them.

“Are you... no way, are you Kanata?” I ask, incredulously. “Yeah!”

Now it’s my turn to laugh. Kanata, the guy I used to play games with all the time, my best friend, is now a young woman. I don’t know if it would have been possible for him to have been reincarnated as anything less like his old self.

“Man, don’t laugh! I was seriously depressed about this for a while after I was reborn, you know?” “Ahaaa, my bad. You were laughing at me just now though! Let’s call it even.” “Yeah. I’m so glad I met you again, though! It’s been rough so far, dealing with this all on my own.” “Ahh, yeah, I totally understand. I’m glad we met too.”

Kanata and I bump fists.

Immediately, an ear-splitting sound roars through the soundproofed door. “What the?!” yells Kanata, panicking. I also panic for an instant, but as soon as I realize who was on the other side, I calm down. Or, rather, I started panicking for a different reason.

With another roar, the door flies off its hinges and crashes into the room. On the other side, I see Sue, her body strengthened with Battle Magic and mana gathering in her fist for another strike. She peers at the two of us, then locks on to Kanata.


“Sue, no! Stop! Stop!!” I dive between them, just barely before Sue was going to blow Kanata to pieces.











Sue runs forward and clings to me tightly. “I won’t let anyone else have you,” she mumbles.

“Your sister’s scaaaary...” says Kanata, in Japanese.

On that day, I met my first classmate.

[prev](#) • [next](#)

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- 
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051 Knowing your opponent's strengths, isn't that wonderful?

I'm A Spider, So What? – 051

**Knowing your opponent's strengths,
isn't that wonderful?**

Invisibly, I lurk behind the rocks.

Elro Daznatch — LV 23

Statistics:

HP: 786/818 (green)

MP: 335/335 (blue)

SP: 779/779 (yellow), 723/781 (red)

Failed to appraise statistics.

A little ways away from the crags I'm currently hiding behind, this guy slowly creeps along. What... is... this thing? If I had to describe it, I'd say it's like... a really huge fish that grew arms and legs? Naaah, that's not quite it. I can't really pin down what I'm getting off of this mysterious life-form.

Well, I don't actually care about this strange and mysterious creature. Ah, no, I can't really say that I don't care. If it spots me, that would suck.

But before that, I have some extremely important news! Yes, the lovely Miss Appraisal has outdone herself once again: I can see my enemies' stats!! Sure, it might just be their health, mana, and stamina, but just that is amazing, right? The success rate isn't very good, though, since it hits maybe once for every three or four tries, but knowing even just a part of an opponents' stats is still huge!

Even with just a rough idea of my opponents' HP, MP, and SP values, I can still

get a pretty decent grasp on how strong they are. So, if I see a huge difference in these values, I absolutely should not fight them. My strategy is self-preservation.

So, in the immediate future, fighting this mysterious life-form is out of the question. These stats are ridiculous, you know! 818 hit points? What the heck? If you hit that guy hard enough to kill me twenty times over, wouldn't it still have health left? This is inflation, right? Oh man, if this weird-looking thing with the stupid-looking face has stats like this, that Earth Dragon has to have 4-digit HP, doesn't it?

No waaaaay.

From what I've gathered so far in the last few days, monsters with levels higher than ten are all powerful. These things are what you'd call advanced monsters, I think, that don't have any evolution past level ten. So, if I see a monster of a species that can have levels greater than ten, I shouldn't engage it, even if its own level is less than ten. On the other hand, if I haven't seen a level ten-plus monster in a given species, then it's probably weak.

What was really shocking, though, was that even some of the small fry I've been hunting had crazy-high stats. Some of them even had triple-digit health! Seriouslyyy, I didn't know you guys were so strooong, and so on. For sure, fighting these things head-on would have been suicide. I've been betting everything on my surprise attacks: an entire battle decided in an instant.

Man, now that I think about it, these things I've been calling "small fry" are, uh, higher-rank than I am. Wow, my Spider Silk must be a really good skill, if it can immobilize these powerful foes without trouble at all. If it wasn't the case, then, well, I'd probably be dead by now, haha. Stats may be important, but skills are just as important too!

I really want to know what my opponent's skills are now... if I knew that, I'd have such a great edge in a fight. When it comes down to it, if you took my skills away from me I'd be left with only my speed. If you bring along fire to burn my webs and an antidote to nullify my poison fangs, my odds of winning drop to basically zero. Oh maaan, skill countermeasures suuuck. I fight someone with that level of preparation, I'm basically just straight-up dead!

Well, I don't really think the monsters down here are bright enough for that. That's why a weak little monster like me can survive down here. Intelligence is

supreme! It's humanity's greatest strength.

Hmmm... humanity, though... I wonder how much of this dungeon humans have explored? The only time I've seen humans so far is when they showed up to burn down my nest. I've seen footprints, of course, but ever since I wound up in those labyrinthine tunnels, I haven't seen any. Hmm, if this is indeed the world's largest dungeon, maybe their exploration isn't making very much progress?

Now that I'm thinking about it, I'm able to eat the monsters down here while humans would have to bring in their own food. If you wanted to explore a huge dungeon like this, you'd need to carry around a huge pile of food. That's already a huge amount of physical labor required, and on top of that you'd need to fight off all of the monsters down here too. If you had a skill or spell that gave you, say, an inventory screen where you could store all of your stuff in a pocket dimension, that would be a little different, but food is still a pretty big limitation.

Based on this, I think human exploration efforts have probably been limited to the upper strata; and, on top of that, probably just a small section of it. If that's true, then it makes a lot of sense as to why I haven't seen very many footprints. If there's no footprints, it's out of the explorable range, right?


Hm? Wait a sec... the first set of footprints I found was... back where that huge spider was, in that area with those huge groups of strong-looking monsters? Whoa, that's in their exploration zone? Even though my mother's there? ...No way, can they defeat that thing?! No way!! If my guess is right, that thing's got to be about as strong as that Earth Dragon, right? They can defeat that thing?! It's not impossible? And if it's not impossible, then wouldn't that make humans crazy strong?










...I just had a really nasty thought. If humans are strong enough to take out my mother, then I should just avoid the outside world completely. No matter how hard I struggled, I wouldn't be able to survive. Living down here in the dungeon would be way easier.

Well, for now, let's just keep on struggling forward, trying to get back to the upper strata. Once I finally manage to get back there, I can find a place where humans won't go. Wait, no, even if it's kinda dangerous shouldn't I go find a human and Appraise his stats, just to be sure? Ah well, it's not like I'm in a huge

hurry. I still have zero clue how to get back up there.

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052Tie them up and cut them down

I'm A Spider, So What? – 052

Tie them up and cut them down

Sneak, sneak.

Left? *Clear!* Right? *Clear!* Target acquired, dead ahead!

Elro Kohokolo — LV 23

Statistics:

HP: 67/89 (green)

MP: 21/21 (blue)

SP: 79/79 (yellow), 54/85 (red)

Failed to appraise statistics.

Ahead of me is a monster that's kind of like a giant pillbug. Well, it's got the body of a pillbug, but its head looks more like a rat's. Is it an insect or a mammal? I want to know. Since it's pillbug-like, it's really likely that it curls up into an armored ball when it needs to defend itself. I fought a turtle monster before, and when it retreated into its shell I had a stupidly tough time with it. Well, if I get that pillbug wrapped up in my silk, it won't be able to curl itself into a ball.

Regardless: Set throwing nets on standby... take this!! Direct hit! Thread Manipulation will take care of the rest.

“You have earned the title [Silk User], and have been awarded the skills [Thread Manipulation (LV 1)] and [Severing Thread (LV 1)]. Your new skill, [Thread Manipulation (LV 1)], has been integrated with your existing skill, [Thread Manipulation (LV 5)], which has grown to level 6.”

Oh? Ohh?! I got another title!! “Silk User”, huh? This titillates my inner special

snowflake.

Hey, pillbug, listen, something's come up, should we just wrap this up now? Does that sound like a plan? ...No? Too bad. So; Poison Fang, Poison Fang, drag you back behind a rock. Yep!

Now, let's get straight to figuring out what this new title does. For a title like Silk User, the requirements must be... using silk, right? Hm? Welllll, If that's the case, it's kinda weird that it's taken me this long to actually earn it. There's got to be some other requirement.

Well, I've got it already, so it actually really doesn't matter what the acquisition requirements are. I've got a better question: is this usable? This time, I'm confident: this title will be very useful. Ah, well, I mean, it bumped my Thread Manipulation level up, which is already huge! Day after day I've been focusing on grinding this thing out, so having it finally level up makes me so, so happy. Just from that alone, this title is worth something.

What's really caught my eye, though, is this other skill. "Severing Thread." Seriously, doesn't that sound like something a kid that's way into anime would come up with? But, is this it? A skill that lets me slash at my enemies with my threads?

It... it can't be!! Cut down by something I did not see... how?! What could have done this?! Urk... is... is this... thread?!

I can make a scene like that happen, right? Hehe. Yaaaah. This is greeeeat!

Well, special snowflake delusions aside, this is obviously a pretty decent boost to my combat abilities. The only real offensive attack I've had up until now was Poison Fang, but now, at long last, my number of usable attacks has increased to two. Furthermore, this is my silk, my main weapon!

Whoops, haha, I haven't even Appraised this or done any experimentation yet, I need to avoid getting ahead of myself here. First things first: Appraise.

Severing Thread: *Applies the slashing attribute to threads.*

Umf. It does what its name implies. I was seriously a little worried about what I would have done if it was something completely ridiculous instead.

Well, that's one worry down. The remaining questions are: can I apply this to my spider silk, can I actually figure out how to activate this skill, and how effective is this at level one...

You know what will come in handy right about now? That monster I just brought down. Come, pillbug, be my lab rat!

Step one, spin some silk. Crank the strength all the way up to maximum, drop the stickiness to zero. I swing it at the corpse of the pillbug while concentrating on the words "Severing Thread". Oh! I definitely feel like it activated.

The thread glanced off of the pillbug's body. Mmm. It's level one, alright, I guess it can't put out very much power? Ah, wait, it cut in a little bit! Isn't this great for a level one skill? The other skills so far have been pretty terrible at level one, so the fact that this can take a piece out of the pillbug's tough shell makes it a really amazing skill.

Which reminds me, what does this cost? Did it consume any mana? Hmm... my mana hasn't gone down at all. My stamina... well, thanks to Overeating, my stamina isn't going down at all so I can't really tell if this had any impact. Keeping in mind Poison Synthesis, I don't think that it's possible for there to be anything that doesn't consume something. So maybe if the actual red stamina gauge didn't go down by a full point, something internally must have ticked down a little bit. But while I don't know exactly how much this costs, the actual cost/performance ratio doesn't seem that bad. On top of that, I've got Overeating keeping my red stamina gauge filled up, which makes this pretty convenient!

Next step is to see if I can use this with a sticky thread as well. Once again, I swing a thread at the pillbug. Hm? Hmmm. I'm sure I activated it correctly, but it didn't even leave a mark.

Well, that's basically what I expected to have happen. From all of the experimentation I've done on my silk, I know that there are some limits on how far I can customize each strand. For instance, if I want to max out a thread's stickiness, it's really difficult to keep its elasticity. It's not that it's impossible, though; it's just not really effective. It's like a thread has a number of points that I can assign to its attributes, and I have to distribute them based on what I want the thread to do. So, when I increased the adhesion attribute, I wasn't able to max out the slashing attribute anymore. Compatibility-wise, mixing those two

attributes isn't impossible, it's just not a very realistic goal to have.

Seriously, though, Severing Thread is a pretty substantial skill. It's basically perfect for me. I need to get its level up as quickly as I can.

So, Mr. Pillbug, that's what's happening. You died before your time, and now I'm whipping your corpse, but please help me raise my skill level!


And, so, I continued slashing away at the pillbug's remains with my Severing Thread.




Translator's notes for this chapter:






1. The Japanese chapter title is a kanji pun wrapped in a pop culture reference. The theme song for the Street Fighter II anime movie was called “ ” (Love, Sadness, and a Strong Heart). The first part of the first word is “ito”, which is usually written with the kanji for love (愛) but can also be written with the kanji for thread (糸), which shares the same pronunciation. If that wasn't enough, the second word was written as 切 instead of 心. This actually doesn't change the meaning at all, since that's the correct kanji to use in this situation, but it's deliberately written using kanji (instead of spelling it out in hiragana like in the song title) because the kanji 切 means “cut”.

Honestly, I gave up on this one and put in whatever. The proper thing to do would be to come up with an equally niche American song reference that has equally good punning capacity but, well, fuck it. I'll fix it if I suddenly think of something (or if someone's got a really good suggestion!)

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053Bit by bit, I'm getting stronger!

I'm A Spider, So What? – 053

Bit by bit, I'm getting stronger!

After bullying my friend the pillbug for a while, I've gotten Severing Thread up to level three. To be honest, I want to keep leveling it a little more, but the pillbug's remains are at this point entirely unfit for daytime TV, so I can't really keep going. Severing Thread still isn't inflicting serious injuries, even at level three, but the garbage still keeps piling up. Pillbug, I will probably, surely, absolutely never, ever forget you. Oh, of course, once I was done I ate it and, of course, it was disgusting as always.

Hmm, now that I think about it, there really wasn't any reason for me to use the pillbug for target practice! Hitting that rock over there would probably been good enough. Oh crap, did I hurt its feelings? Nah, nah, I bet that its soul is weeping tears of joy, since it was so useful to me. Hm? "Brute"? I have no idea what you're talking about!

So, after I finished up with bullying the pillbug, a new monster showed up, drawn by the sound or something like that.

Anograch — LV 8 — *Failed to appraise statistics.*

First time I've seen one of these. It's a monkey-looking monster, about two meters tall. Since I couldn't appraise its statistics, I wanted to just slip past it, but, nope, it spotted me.

Well, somehow it turned out splendidly. It looked like the type that used speed to its advantage, and, guess what, I'm faster. I just dodged around its flailing arms and then, in an instant, snagged it with my silk and tied it up.

That was really scary! No, seriously. It's been a super long time since I've had to fight head-on like that! And this monkey was really strong, too! That terrible

whooshing noise its arm made while it was flailing around made it abundantly clear that this guy wasn't a joke. If it hit me, I was absolutely dead. I dodged every swing as if it were life or death. If I had a mouth, I would have been screaming. Like, "Eeeeeek!!"? Yeah, of course like "Eeeeeek!!".

Thanks to my frantic scrambling around, I earned the Evasion skill. Appraising it gave predictable results: it's a skill that raises my ability to evade. Finally, the king of speed-specialization skills! On top of that, as soon as I defeated the monkey, I leveled up.

"Experience requirements met. Small Taratekt, you have grown from level 3 to level 4. Every ability score has been increased. Acquired bonus skill proficiencies from leveling up: your skill [Concentration (LV 1)] has been raised to level 2, your skill [Throw (LV 1)] has been raised to level 2, and your skill [Aiming (LV 1)] has been raised to level 2. You have acquired additional skill points."

Three skills leveled up in one go. Sure, they're the plain, utilitarian skills, but I'm still really happy! After leveling up, my stats now look like this:

Small Taratekt — LV 4 — (no name)

Statistics:

HP: 40/40 (green)

MP: 40/40 (blue)

SP: 40/40 (yellow), 40/40 (red)

Avg. Offense: 22

Avg. Defense: 22

Avg. Magic Power: 20

Avg. Resistance: 20

Avg. Speed: 390

Skills:

[Automatic HP Recovery (LV 2)] • [Poison Fang (LV 8)] • [Poison Synthesis (LV 1)] • [Spider Silk (LV 8)] • [Severing Thread (LV 3)] • [Thread Manipulation (LV 6)] • [Throw (LV 2)] • [Concentration (LV 2)] • [Aiming (LV 2)] • [Appraisal (LV 7)] • [Detection (LV 4)] • [Stealth (LV 5)] • [Corruption Magic (LV 2)] • [Shadow Magic (LV 1)] • [Poison Magic (LV 1)] • [Overeating (LV 3)] • [Night Vision (LV

10)] • [Visible Spectrum Expansion (LV 1)] • [Poison Resistance (LV 7)] • [Paralysis Resistance (LV 3)] • [Petrification Resistance (LV 2)] • [Acid Resistance (LV 3)] • [Decay Resistance (LV 3)] • [Fear Resistance (LV 5)] • [Ignore Pain] • [Pain Tolerance (LV 5)] • [Strength (LV 2)] • [Toughness (LV 2)] • [Kartikeya (LV 2)] • [Taboo (LV 2)] • []

Just as before, everything but my speed stat is terrible. If I didn't have Kartikeya, my speed would be terrible as well, and then all I'd have going for me is my silk. Praise be to Kartikeya, and all that.

I may be happy that I got a bunch of stuff just now, but now's not the time to get careless. I could have attracted more monsters here than just the monkey. So, first things first, time to eat.

Mmm. This guy isn't poisonous! It's not bitter at all. It's got a really peculiar stink to it, though, so it's still not in the slightest bit tasty. Man, I really miss cows. And pigs. They were the best.

My stamina might be full up, but thanks to my Overeating skill nothing went to waste. Overeating... when I first got it, I was really cautious about it thanks to its negative-sounding name, but now that I know more it's really quite a useful skill.

I've mentioned this before, but I am extremely dependent on my stamina. Spinning webs and running around both drain it considerably, so a skill that lets me store up an extra pile of stamina is super useful for me. If I could use any of my magic, I might wind up spending less stamina, but there's no point in dwelling on things I can't do anything about.

Oh, on the subject of magic, I got around to appraising each of the spells I know.

Disquiet: Manipulates the target's soul to directly induce discomfort.

Phantom Pain: Manipulates the target's soul to induce illusory feelings of pain.

Deep Shadow: Darkens target shadow.


Poison Touch: Inflicts poison damage on target touched.









Disquiet is, just like it's name, a mind attack. Phantom Pain is pretty similar, too. Poison Touch seems to be pretty powerful, but it's a level one spell, so there's

probably some sort of downside. Deep Shadow... does exactly what it says it does, but how useful is this? Hmmmm. Do I maybe link this up with higher level Shadow Magic spells? It looks like there's not really a good basic use for this.

Well, of course, it's not like I can use any of it anyway! Now then, I've finished eating up this monkey, so let's get back on the road.

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054The struggle for sleep!

I'm A Spider, So What? – 054

The struggle for sleep!

Ugggh, I'm sleepy. I'm getting pretty dangerously drowsy here. Camping out without even a simple home is really starting to get to me. I thought I'd be able to stick with it, but at this rate I'm going to be in serious trouble if I can't find a way to get a decent night's rest.

Really, though, if it was that easy to just get a good night's sleep, I wouldn't be forcing myself forward to the point of exhaustion like this. Although it does look like the Earth Dragon isn't going to chase me here, this place is still swarming with other strong monsters. A simple home is probably not enough protection.

On the other hand, making a proper home is completely out of the question! I am absolutely not going to settle down here. I need to get out of here as quickly as I can. Taking a ton of time to make a more durable home is a huge mistake.

So, the only option I really have is making a simple home, although I don't know how effective it's going to be against the monsters that lurk around here... and so on and so on.

What should I dooo? I think, as I shake my sleepy head. Even if I'm just making a simple home, can't I make it better by doing things a little differently? Like, I don't want to build it just anywhere; I need to find a place where it'll be less likely to be found. Easier said than done, though: the rocks here are really craggy, so there's not really any places to hide among them. Ugh.

Wait, hang on. Do I really have to hide? All I really need is a home that other monsters won't mess with, right? If that's the case, I've got a great idea.

Immediately, I start to move. My destination? The top of these tall, tall cavern walls: the ceiling.

Whooooaaaa. So hiiiiigh. I'm scaaaaaared. Can I really sleep up here? Well, I don't see any monsters around here that could either fly or climb the walls to get me. Oh, well, there's the snail-bugs, but that doesn't matter. I haven't seen any wasps flying around in this wide-open cavern, so if I make a simple home in the corner between the wall and the ceiling, I should be able to sleep safely in there.

All right then, shall we start building? Whoa, I'm seriously high up. I've got to be about a hundred meters off the ground... how many stories is that? If I fall from here, I'm definitely dead. Well, I guess I can fasten a lifeline so that I won't fall far if I do slip, but working with zero safety gear other than that is pretty terrifying. Fear Resistance, work harder please!

“Proficiency requirements met. Your skill, [Fear Resistance (LV 5)] has been raised to level 6.”

I'm sorry! I didn't mean it. There was no need for that perfectly-timed rebuttal. Man, you startled me!

S... so anyway, I've finished the basic frame. It's pretty simple, just some basic sticky webbing stretched between the wall and the ceiling. I think that next I'm going to hang up some kind of hammock-like web to sleep in.

Hmmm. Although, wouldn't I then be completely exposed? If something had a long-ranged attack like that Earth Dragon's breath weapon, I'd be helpless against it. So, how should I hide this... I wonder if I could surround it with loose rocks?

I descend from the ceiling, and find a rock. Hmmm. This one's pretty big. How can I make this work? Can I chop it up with my silk? I wrap a thread around the rock, and activate Severing Thread. Pull! Hmm, it cut in a little bit, but this isn't going to work. Maybe if I run it back and forth like a saw...? Oh! It's working, little by little.

“Proficiency requirements met. Your skill, [Severing Thread (LV 3)] has been raised to level 4.”

The skill level went up partway through, so my work got a little more efficient. Alright! The rock slices are complete. Now, if I can get these attached to the outside of my nest, I'll have some camouflage!

I firmly attach threads to each of the rocks, then ascend the hundred meters up to where my nest is. Right, now all that's left is to start pulling on these threads! Yyyaaaargh! H... heavy! Rgggggggh! Ugh, maybe if I use my body weight... And... pull!!

“Proficiency requirements met. Your skill, [Strength (LV 2)] has been raised to level 3.”

At some point my Strength skill leveled up. It leveled up, but man this is still heavy! I'm burning through all of my stamina! This... is... hard!!

“Proficiency requirements met. You have gained the skill [Alacrity (LV 1)].”
“Proficiency requirements met. You have gained the skill [Endurance (LV 1)].”

I picked up some skills! It's not like I have time to figure out what they do, though! Now... PULL!!

Hah, hah, haaaaaaah. I finally have them all up. Whoa, now that I look, I actually burned through all of my Overeating stockpile and cut into my actual stamina. Maaan, this was way too hard.

Hmm? That's weird, I thought this was supposed to be a quick-and-easy way to get some sleep... why did I put so much effort into this? Hmmm... no matter how I think about it, this is my own defeat. Yyyep.

Alright, after all of that effort, it looks like the rocks I've got hung up around my nest are doing a great job of hiding me from view. Now all that's left is making a bed... and... done!

Ahhhhh. Ab, so, lute, bliss. You just can't beat the comfort of a nest! Now I can finally, finally get some sleep in safety and comfort.

Oh! Let's check my new skills real quick before I sleep.

Alacrity: Increases the amount of instantaneous Stamina available.


Endurance: Increases the amount of long-term Stamina available.









Oh! The stamina versions of Strength! It looks like my stamina went up from 40 to 41. Stamina is super important, so this is absolutely delightful.

Alright, skills have been checked, and since I'm super exhausted from all that heavy labor, sleep time! After so long, I can finally, finally sleep soundly, so I'm going to rest to my heart's content.

And, so, good night.

[prev](#) • [next](#)

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055The Hundred-Meter High Onslaught (1)

I'm A Spider, So What? – 055

The Hundred-Meter High Onslaught (1)

Ahhh, sleep. Yeah. Sleep is good. Although... that's odd. I was planning on sleeping way longer than this, so why did I wake up like this? Hmm? All the hairs on my body feel like they're standing on end... This is probably bad.

I peek my head out juuuuuust a little bit from around the rocks and look down.

Anograch — LV 6 — *Failed to appraise statistics.*

Anograch — LV 3 — *Failed to appraise statistics.*

Anograch — LV 8
Statistics:

HP: 165/168 (green)

MP: 38/38 (blue)

SP: 127/127 (yellow), 109/118 (red)

Failed to appraise statistics.

Anograch — LV 5 — *Failed to appraise statistics.*

.....

An army of monkeys, about fifty members strong, has assembled beneath me.

Eh? This is a joke, right? They're looking up right at me. How?! My rock camouflage is perfect! I checked it myself earlier, and when you glance at it, it just looks like a little chunk of rock sticking out of the wall. What the heck?!

Whoa, this is bad! Those monkeys are climbing. Their progress is slow and they're having a tough time of it, but they're still coming up. It looks like I've still got a few minutes until they reach me, so now I really need to come up with some kind of plan.

From here, it looks like running away along the ceiling is probably my best bet. Attempting to fight that many monkeys is, how should I put it, impossible. So! Now that that's settled, let's get out of here immediately.

Huh? The ceiling seems to be a different color... What?! It's ridiculously slippery! My threads can barely even stick to it! What the heck...

The ceiling, after about one or two meters, transitions to a different kind of rock. It's so smooth that my feet can't get a grip, and even maximally adhesive silk doesn't stick very well to it at all. Looks like running away across the ceiling isn't going to work.

So I've got no choice but to run away along the wall. They'll probably try to chase after me, but that'll be a battle of perseverance. Alright, let's gOW!

Wha?! What the heck! A rock? Whoa, these jerks are throwing rocks at me! Wait, they can reach me all the way up here? Whoa, here comes another!

Quickly, I duck behind an outcropping, and the rock hits the wall where I was moments ago. It doesn't seem to have very much force behind it, as you'd expect of a rock thrown a hundred meters straight up, but if it hits me while I'm clinging to a vertical surface, there's a good chance I'll get knocked off. To be able to both aim at me from down there and also actually make that throw... they probably have the Throw and Aiming skills, huh.

An awful chill runs through me. I can't run away like this. What am I going to do!

Wait, I've still got one more thing I can try: counterattack.

Luckily, I've build a home here, even if it is simple. Before those monkeys get here, I need to fortify this place as much as possible so that I can meet them head-on. This is going to be like that battle with the wasps, where I was clinging to the wall, but this time it's not my enemies that have the terrain advantage. Rather, my simple home provides me both fortifications and footholds that I can

use to seize the advantage for myself.

This is my only shot.

First, I scatter strands of silk, using Thread Manipulation to stick them to the walls around me. It's crude, but at least this'll make it a little bit harder to climb up to get me. It takes me longer than I would like, since I have to keep dodging the rocks they're still throwing at me. By the time I'm finished, the first wave of monkeys is about halfway up the wall.

Not good. These monkeys are moving faster than I had thought. There's no way that silk I've spread out so far is going to be able to stop all of them. What now? Aaah, do I have any way that I can attack them from here? I've got Throw and Aiming too, but what am I going to throw...

Ah! I might not have anything to throw, but I certainly have something to drop!

I poke my head out from behind my rocks and invoke Poison Synthesis. Of course, what I synthesize isn't that Weak Poison. No, I synthesize the venom that I've spent my entire life as a spider perfecting: my deadly Spider Poison.

A ball of poison materializes before me and hovers briefly in the air before gravity pulls it down. The monkeys climbing on the wall have no way to dodge. The poison hits the lead monkey square in the face, and it falls, screaming in agony. This... works!!

I quickly glance over at my mana bar. I only spent a single point! Or, in other words, my maximum is forty shots. With everything I spent on Thread Manipulation, though, I've only got about twenty-five. If every one of those hits, though, I'll be able to take out over half of those things!

I immediately fire off a second one. It finds its mark, and another monkey falls. I keep firing, steadily; if it works, it works.

“Proficiency requirements met. Your skill, [Poison Synthesis (LV 1)] has been raised to level 2.”

My skill level went up, but I've got no time to check it. Besides, there's no way the new poison would beat out my Spider Poison.


I've taken down quite a few monkeys, but they've started to adapt. They're no longer climbing up directly below me, and have started moving to the side. I drop the rest of my poison on the stragglers.








“Proficiency requirements met. Your skill, [Aiming (LV 2)] has been raised to level 3.”

Good, good. The last few monkeys beneath me fall comedically. The rest have moved out of range; I won't be able to hit them with poison anymore. The timing's pretty good, though, I was starting to get a little worried about my mana reserves.

I scatter a few threads in the monkeys' way. This fight has only just begun.

[prev](#) • [next](#)

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S08Skill Encyclopedia

I'm A Spider, So What? – S08

Skill Encyclopedia

My eyes are rooted to the tome in front of me.

“What do you think? It’s amazing, right?” asks Kanata (er, I mean, Katia, the duke’s daughter), with an eager expression on her face.

Ever since the Appraisal ceremony, Katia’s been coming over to hang out frequently. At first, I wanted to call her Kanata, but that felt kind of unnatural, so I decided to go with her current name: Carnatia, or Katia for short.

Katia, though, has continued to insist on calling me “Shun” like she did before. It’s a stretch, but you can take the “sh” sound from the start of Slaine and the “n” from the end and sort of turn it into “Shun”, so it’s been rather forcefully decided that that’s my nickname. I don’t mind much that we’re using nicknames for each other, but to everyone around us, it looks like we’ve got a very close relationship. This is absolutely true; Katia and I are great friends. Katia, however, is now a girl, and there are those who are thinking of our relationship as the other kind of close.

Top on the list of these people is my younger sister Sue, who is sitting between me and Katia. Whenever Katia comes over, Sue always gives her the most withering glare, then firmly insists on being between us at all times. Katia always smiles wryly when this happens. I tried so hard to be a good older brother, why did this have to happen...

“This is the Skill Encyclopedia from the Duke’s manor,” says Katia. “This one is, of course, far more detailed than the ones you can find in the markets.”

This book contains thorough descriptions of every skill known to humankind, down to the most minute details. Not only does it list what each skill does and

how it can be used, but it also lists the steps you need to take to acquire it. Basically, it's a strategy guide.

Incidentally, when Katia speaks the language of this world, she sounds completely different compared to when she speaks Japanese. Her Japanese is very rough and masculine, but this world's language comes out with the eloquence and grace expected of the nobility. The gap between what she sounds like and what I know is in her head used to seem enormous, but I've gotten used to it.

"Wow, this is great. Now that we have this, we can get any skill we want, right?" I ask.

"Oh, not at all. Time, after all, is limited. One must first decide which skills they truly want, and then devote their limited time to their acquisition."

Excitedly, I flip through the book. There are plenty of skills that I recognize, and even more that I've never seen before. Whenever I saw a new skill with a particularly powerful effect, I'd pause for a little bit.

"If I am not mistaken, you and Sue have already acquired the basic stat-raising skills, correct? If you have yet to acquire them, you should do so soon."

The stat-raising skills Katia is referring to are the ones that simply boost your stats, like Vitality, Mana Pool, Strength, and so on.

"When these stat-raising skills reach level ten," says Katia, "they undergo an evolution. The upgraded skills not only have greatly superior effects, but they also grant a permanent bonus to your stats whenever you level up. We have yet to be allowed into battle with a monster, so our levels are still, of course, one. As such, I feel that it would be most wise for us to acquire these bonus-granting skills before we begin to raise our levels."

Our levels are still one. They're raised by killing any sort of creature, not just monsters. We've not been granted permission to go outside, let alone fight monsters, so we haven't been able to level up yet.

Even so, our stats are still gradually increasing thanks to our constant training. Rapid growth, however, seems limited to level-ups.

"If at all possible," Katia continues, "I would like to evolve each of our stat-

raising skills twice, but I fear that may be somewhat out of our reach.”

When you grind up a skill to level ten and it evolves, you gain a number of new benefits. However, earning each level requires acquiring even more skill proficiency points than the last, so actually reaching level ten tends to be extremely difficult.

“Our stats will get dramatically better once we acquire the high-level skills like Fortitude, Fortress, and Kartikeya. I will be most satisfied if we could reach this goal, but it is essential that we at the very least acquire their precursors.”

“Definitely,” I say. “I’m really surprised, though; I don’t see any skills to boost XP or skill proficiency.”

Skills that boost your experience gains are invaluable in RPGs, yet there’s nothing anything like that here.

Katia nods. “Correct. Also, have you noticed?”

“Yeah.”

Now that I’ve finished skimming through the entire encyclopedia, I see what Katia’s hinting at. Sue, who was reading over my shoulder, doesn’t seem to have picked up on it. She looks disgruntled at how easily Katia and I are understanding it.

“There’s no crafting skills,” I say.

“It is worse than that. Every single skill listed in this book is intended for use in combat.”

That’s right, even though there are enough skills to fill this entire book, there are no crafting skills, and no skills whatsoever that are strictly non-combat. There are skills that can be put to use as crafting skills, but all of them are combat skills that happen to have a useful side effect. For there to be this many skills, and for them to all be dedicated towards one purpose... I have a bad feeling about this.

It could just be that Katia and I are only noticing this because of our experience playing games back in Japan. It could be that everyone who grew up in the world simply thinks of this just as the way skills work.

“It’s like...” I whisper, “...like this world was built for combat.”

As the words leave my mouth, a chill runs down my spine. This is a world where the only way to level up is to kill something, a world where every skill is made for combat. This really does seem to be a world that heavily encourages combat.


“This is not widely known yet,” says Katia, “but I hear that the Demon Lord is rapidly massing its troops.”










“That’s...”

“Someday, we will be forced into battle. Until then, we should concentrate on becoming as strong as we can.”

I nod, silently.

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056The Hundred-Meter High Onslaught (2)

I'm a Spider, So What? – 056

The Hundred-Meter High Onslaught (2)

The monkeys climb the walls towards me. I send out sticky strands of silk using Thread Manipulation, and adhere them to the wall in their path. This isn't good. My mana reserves are almost dry. I think I might have overdone it with the Poison Synthesis. If it's come to this, I'm going to have to string those threads up manually.

I quickly duck into the shadow of a crag as another rock sails towards me. The monkeys still left on the ground are still throwing rock after rock at me. I don't think I'm in any danger of taking a fatal wound if I get hit by one of those, but this isn't doing anything to help my outlook.

The first of the monkeys rushes into the zone I've filled with my sticky threads. Of course, it immediately gets tangled up and can't move any further. Now that the vanguard is tied up, they'll be forced to go around. I've bought myself a little bit of t... time?!

These guys, they're using their captured compatriot as a ladder!! They've still got a ways to go before they get out of my sticky-thread zone, but they're going to be here way quicker than I thought.

...*Fuck!*

I can't afford to keep anything in reserve. I cast my first throwing net down at where the monkeys are most closely bunched up. Anything that gets caught in that I can ignore for now. They can struggle and struggle, but all they'll do is get tangled up even further in my sticky webbing. They won't be able to move very much. If they get stuck in the path, they'll make for a great obstacle.

I can also ignore the monkeys that are already stuck to the walls. Based on the few stats I saw earlier, I don't think any of these things are strong enough to pull themselves free. I won't fight with Severing Thread this time. My proven strategy so far is to use my maximally-adhesive threads and arrest their movements. Once I've done that, I can kill these things off at my leisure.

I throw my second net. Once again, a ton of monkeys are caught up in it. Right as I launch my third net, though, a rock comes sailing up from below, and I dodge it reflexively. Shit, these guys have good timing.

On top of that, those monkeys had been getting wise to my throwing nets and had started scattering to either side. They're spread out thinly enough that I won't be able to capture more than one or two at a time. These guys are probably the smartest monsters I've had to face so far!

If they're so smart, surely they realize this isn't worth it! What do they stand to gain from killing a tiny little spider like me? Yet these monkeys keep single-mindedly coming at me, no matter the cost. Leave me allooone! I'll forgive you for your passionate pursuit. Why don't you turn that passion to a better cause? Something like, I don't know, ██████ing? (That was a voluntary bleep.)

Even while thinking such frivolous thoughts, I've been scattering more silk. Since the monkeys have dispersed to either side, I have to throw my silk everywhere to try to catch them all. I'm using Thread Manipulation the barest minimum in order to accomplish what I want to do. In a situation like this, running out of mana would be extremely dangerous.

Somehow barricading myself in my simple home is not an option, because I am one hundred meters from the ground. My silk may be strong, but it's not at all invincible. It's weak to fire, and the earth dragon was able to blast it away effortlessly. It's amazingly resilient, but if something comes at it with enough force, they can break through.

I don't think these monkeys are anywhere near strong enough to tear through it. If we were on the ground, I'd absolutely hide myself away and turn this into a siege. But we are not on the ground. Let's say they were all to start attacking my home. They'd all get stuck, of course, but then my home would have to support all of their bodyweight. I don't know how many it would take, but eventually my simple home wouldn't be able to bear it anymore, and when that happens...

My home has no foundation. It's strung between the wall and the ceiling, and held up solely by adhesion. It can support at least my weight and the weight of those rocks, but I don't know how much more it can actually hold up. I had thought about expanding and fortifying it before, but I chose to work on trying to tie these things down instead. If I had expanded it, I would have been able to greatly multiply its maximum load. Considering how many monkeys there are down there now, that might have actually been the best idea. Wish I'd gone with that one.

Why, do you ask? Because there aren't any fewer monkeys down there than when I started! I thought there might have been a chance that I didn't actually kill the ones I knocked off the wall with my poison, but, no, there is indeed a pile of corpses accumulating at the base of the wall. It doesn't look like any of them are somehow being revived.

The only explanation is that there are somehow more monkeys down there than there were when we started. They're receiving so-called reinforcements! Ha ha... these guys just keep pouring out of somewhere. When we started, I think there were about fifty, but now there's easily twice that number. And on top of that, more are still on their way! This is terrifying; I'm in for a marathon, and there's no finish line in sight.

What do I do? Seriously, what do I do? I'm not just worried about my mana; my red stamina is also super low! I've been spinning silk more-or-less constantly since this fight began. If I run out of stamina, this is over. I won't be able to spin any more thread, and that alone is reason enough for me to avoid that happening at all costs.

I get ready to let loose the Silken Smasher. My target: the closest monkey to me. I launch it, it hits. Good! I start hauling it up, bringing with it the creature stuck to it.

It thrashes about violently, but I tie it up with my silk, then stab it through with my Poison Fang. As I do so, one of the rock-throwing monkeys scores a direct hit.

Ow!! My health only went down by five, though. As I thought, each rock doesn't have very much force behind it by the time it gets up to me, since it's thrown all the way up from the ground. It hurts, but thanks to Ignore Pain and Pain

Tolerance, I push through it with force of will.


My poison drains the life from the monkey. Then, I start eating!












This is a race against time. I need to finish this thing off as quickly as I can so that I can return to battle. The monkeys down there are still struggling against my sticky webs. Many of them have been caught up permanently in my threads, but at the same time, they're building a bridge of bodies that's almost complete. Bit by bit, they're closing the gap. If I get my stamina back, I can go another round, but I really need to think of this as my only chance to do so. So, I must now finish eating this thing as quickly as I can, not wasting a single scrap!

NnngHAAA!

Finished! I can somehow feel the killing intent from these monkeys grow stronger, but now's my turn! I am the one who eats! I'm not going to let myself be devoured by the likes of you!

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057The Hundred-Meter High Onslaught (3)

I'm A Spider, So What? – 057

The Hundred-Meter High Onslaught (3)

I scatter silk as quickly as I can.

“Proficiency requirements met. Your skill, [Concentration (LV 2)] has been raised to level 3.”

Thanks to all of this concentrating I've been doing, Concentration's level has gone up. That's not really important right now, though. I've really got no attention to spare.

Below me, the monkeys are piling up on the silk that I've been smearing around. Still, their numbers aren't decreasing at all. Instead, they just keep coming. Even as I keep tying more and more of them down, even more reinforcements are approaching. It's like every single monkey in the area is making an appearance.

I have two mana remaining. I have no idea what bad things might happen to me when it goes down to zero, and that's enough reason for me to stop myself from using those last few points. I can't use Thread Manipulation at all.

I spin my silk. Another monkey gets tangled up. But then, it does something I could not believe.

It jumped.

It strikes the earth below with a wet thud. At this height, even a monster can't survive. It seems like these things would rather die than serve as further roadblocks to their compatriots.

Unbelievable. I never would have thought I'd see anything like this, and it sends shivers through me. I'd held out hope that if I continued ensnaring these things as they came, they'd eventually give up, but that fragile hope has been thoroughly shattered. These monkeys will stop at nothing to destroy me. There's only two endings to this fight: either I kill all of these monkeys, or they kill me.

Another rock sails at me, but I can't avoid it. I don't have that kind of free time. It hits me square on, and my health decreases. Even still, I push through it with Pain Tolerance and Ignore Pain. I'm entrusting my health to Automatic HP Recovery. I must continue scattering my silk, despite the rocks. If I don't, weathering this battle will be completely impossible.

I was making fun of these monkeys just a little while ago. After all, they're no big deal next to that Earth Dragon. Really, nothing is really a big deal compared to the Earth Dragon. That was a huge mistake, though. I'm a huge idiot. How could I forget how weak *I* am? Literally everything in the area is a formidable opponent when you compare them against me. How could I have started thinking of these guys as small fry?

On top of that, despite how much stronger these monkeys are than I am, these monkeys are suicidally bent on crushing me into the ground. When a more powerful monster stakes its life on my destruction, I can't just carelessly waltz through it. I need to make every preparation and tackle the situation head-on.

I'm hit by another rock, and for an instant, for a single instant, I flinch. In that gap, a monkey finally breaks through and seizes my leg. Half of its body has been tangled in my webs, but it's reached out with its long, unhindered right arm.

My leg makes a horrible grating sound in its clenched fist. I force myself to push away the pain as my foot is crushed, and lunge forward to stab the monkey's arm with my Poison Fang.

The monkey uses the last of its strength to tear half of my leg off.

Pain. Mind-searing pain. Pain beyond the limits of what Pain Tolerance can protect me from. Can Automatic HP Recovery fix a missing body part? Do I have to wait for a level-up?

No. Now is not the time for me to worry about a missing leg. I'm wasting time,

and the monkeys are seizing the opportunity to climb even higher. I spin my silk. I spin all of my silk. I spin my silk until I once again am down to just a sliver of stamina.

The monkeys that get caught up in it fling themselves to the ground below. I can't even spare a glance as I spin more silk.

“Experience requirements met. Small Taratekt, you have grown from level 4 to level 5. Every ability score has been increased. Acquired bonus skill proficiencies from leveling up: your skill [Concentration (LV 3)] skill has been raised to level 4, your skill [Aiming (LV 3)] has been raised to level 4, and your skill [Toughness (LV 2)] has been raised to level 3. You have acquired additional skill points.”

The instant I hear that voice, I dive into the safety of my home. This couldn't come at a better time... or a worse one. I'm molting. I impatiently struggle out of my old skin as quickly as I can. My missing leg is, of course, perfectly healed. I fling off the last of my old skin, and immediately return to battle.

As expected, the monkeys are clinging to the outside of my simple home. Finally, the monkeys have reached my final line of defense.

Leveling up has completely recovered my mana and stamina, but it might have come too late for me to be able to use it...

No. There's still a way. I reach my legs out of my simple home.

Of course the monkeys latch on to them immediately, but does it look like I care?! I reach out and touch the enormous tangle of silk that I've been constantly spewing out. I focus all of my will, and activate Thread Manipulation. Little by little, I feel my power spreading out through the mass of threads. Since I'd spent all that time raising my skill level, the total amount of thread that I can control has considerably increased. It's still impossible for me to control this entire thing, but that's okay.

My mana depletes at an enormous rate as I force my will into my silk. My captured legs are making that same awful grinding noise again, and I am being slowly dragged out of my home. The monkeys' outstretched arms grab at me. I somehow manage to avoid the ones reaching for my head, but the rest of my body is seized. The monkeys crush me mercilessly with all their strength, and

my health starts to rapidly decrease as pain shoots through me.

“Proficiency requirements met. You have gained the skill [Vitality (LV 1)].”
“Proficiency requirements met. You have gained the skill [Mana Pool (LV 1)].”

The so-called “Voice of Heaven” calls out just as I finish my preparations. With all of my remaining power, I manipulate my threads.


At my command, all of the threads I had stuck to the walls come unglued. Of course, this means that all of the monkeys stuck to them start to plummet. With an enormous crash, a veritable wall of silk and captured monkeys smashes down on the throng still below.




“Experience requirements met. Small Taratekt, you have grown from level 5 to level 6. Every ability score has been increased. Acquired bonus skill proficiencies from leveling up: your skill [Thread Manipulation (LV 6)] skill has been raised to level 7, and your skill [Overeating (LV 3)] has been raised to level 4. You have acquired additional skill points.”

“Experience requirements met. Small Taratekt, you have grown from level 6 to level 7. Every ability score has been increased. Acquired bonus skill proficiencies from leveling up: your skill [Pain Tolerance (LV 5)] skill has been raised to level 6, your skill [Stealth (LV 5)] has been raised to level 6, and your skill [Evasion (LV 1)] has been raised to level 2. You have acquired additional skill points.”

In a single instant, I massacre them.

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058The Hundred-Meter High Onslaught (4)

I'm A Spider, So What? – 058

The Hundred-Meter High Onslaught (4)

Thanks to my level-up molting, I've freed myself from the monkeys' grasp. They're still clinging on to the two layers' worth of old skin. I was able to knock off the vast majority of those monkeys after I brought that entire wall of silk down, but the ones who were clinging to my simple home are still completely intact. Well, except for the fact that they're still stuck in my web. I layer some more silk on top of them to make absolutely sure they can't move, then use Poison Fang to make them stop moving for good.

After I finish off the very last monkey, I breathe the tiniest sigh of relief. This is not even close to over with, but at the very least I have cleared the first wave.

I whip myself back into shape. There's no time to relax. this is not even close to over with! These monkeys have yet to be exterminated. I cannot relax until every single one of them is dead.

I immediately leave my home and look beneath me. A grisly scene spreads across the ground below.

All of the monkeys that had been unable to free themselves from my webs now lie smashed to pieces amidst the corpses of those that had fallen off before. Yet even still, even amongst this horrifying carnage, the monkeys' fighting spirit still shines forth.

I immediately start spreading new webs along the wall. These guys aren't giving up. When they've finished regrouping, they'll renew their assault. Before that happens, I need to make sure that I'm done regrouping as well.

The monkeys' reinforcements still keep coming. Seriously, they're still coming... Give me a break!

On top of that, amongst those reinforcements were monsters that should not have been there.

Bagrgrach — LV 3 — *Failed to appraise statistics.*

Bagrgrach — LV 4 — *Failed to appraise statistics.*

Bagrgrach — LV 6 — *Failed to appraise statistics.*

Mouths like those of a giant crocodile. Brutal teeth, like saws, within those mouths. Thick, heavy bodies that tower twice as tall over the other monkeys. Those deformed apes have arrived.

Those things were the first monsters I saw when I arrived in this area. The other monkeys' species name is "Anograch". I really should have noticed the similarity. These giants must be the monkeys' evolved form. So, monsters that should never have arrived have shown up as part of the reinforcements.

Three of those things have lumbered into view. These things are pretty low-leveled compared to the other things I've seen, but this is an evolved form. I can't rely on the level. To start with, the monkeys are formidable opponents in a fair fight, and their evolved forms are definitely not going to be any weaker. When I factor in its fiendishly brutal appearance, it's probably best for me to think of these things as on a level incomparable to that of the monkeys. They're nowhere near as terrifying as the Earth Dragon, but there are three of them. This fight just got harder, again.

I pause, dumbfounded, for a moment, but I'm yanked back to reality as the surviving monkeys start to advance. They take a wide route to either side of my pile of fallen silk to avoid getting caught, and start to climb back up the walls. From that, I know that they're now being extra-careful about my silk. Man, these are seriously difficult opponents.

I lay down additional layers of silk, keeping an eye on the giant monkeys. They haven't moved since they arrived. Maybe they aren't super proactive about cooperating with the regular ones? That would be great, but I can't afford any optimism. I absolutely must keep an eye out for any movement from them.

It seems like the monkeys have stopped throwing rocks at me. It wasn't very effective, and it might be even harder to reach me now that there's a huge pile of silk in the way. It looks like they're committing entirely to climbing the wall to come at me instead. I'm actually really thankful for that. Those rocks were able to shave away my health and stop me from moving freely; simple, but effective. If they're not doing that, then it's all for the better.

Oh, a big monkey has started to move. It slowly reaches down and picks up a rock. ...Wait, a rock!? That rock, which it is lifting up as if it weighs nothing at all, is the same kind of *boulder* that I chopped up to cover my home with! That should have been stuck firmly into the ground, yet that monkey is picking it up like it weighs nothing at all! Even lifting individual slices up one at a time was ridiculously heavy!! Huh? What are you doing with that...? W... wait, why are you holding it up like that... don't tell me?!?!

I evacuate my simple home as fast as my legs can take me. Just after I get clear, the boulder smashes into my home with all the force of an artillery shot. When the cloud of dust starts to clear, I can see that my simple home has been completely pulverized.

You're kidding, right? What unbelievable power. A single hit from one of those would end me. Oh, lucky me, there aren't any more boulders in arms' reach of the big monkeys. There won't be any more ridiculous artillery strikes for now.

Though... my simple home, my last line of defense, was just obliterated. I'm going to have to fight without a home to fall back to.


This is bad. It's bad enough that I've lost my fortifications, but I was using that structure to secure my footing. I've been able to focus all of my efforts so far on attacking because I was so confident in my footing. Now that it's gone, though, there's a chance that I might slip and fall at an inopportune moment. I'm not going to actually plummet to my death if that happens, thanks to the thread I've got attaching me to the ceiling, but I'd still be left completely defenseless. If this weakness gets out, the monkeys are absolutely going to capitalize on it.











I come to a very quick decision. I need to build a scaffold to grab on to, even if it's hastily made. Sure, I won't be able to work on spreading silk elsewhere, but whenever the monkeys finally get here, I won't have time to build anything then. If I don't do it now, I'm going to deeply regret it.

Right! I've completed a structure just big enough for me to cling to! This is where I'll fight my foes.

The second round of this siege begins now.

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059The Hundred-Meter High Onslaught (5)

I'm A Spider, So What? – 059

The Hundred-Meter High Onslaught (5)

The monkeys keep advancing, and I keep spreading my webs in their path. So far, everything's going like it did the first time around. There are, however, a few important differences.

The monkeys have figured out what my silk can do to them. If they get caught, they can't escape. So, they've arranged their formation such that the largest monkeys are out in front. The vanguard charges forward as far as it can into the areas where I've stuck my silk, pulling as many strands with it as it can, clearing the path a little bit more for the monkeys behind it.

So, now there are countless monkeys stuck, spread-eagled, to the wall. Not only that, but in order to stop me from flinging them all off at once again, they're clinging tightly to the wall itself as well. Thus, the monkeys are advancing on a highway built from their compatriots' backs. When each monkey gets stuck to a thread, it throws itself against the wall with no concern for its own escape. This is a completely suicidal strategy, but I'm amazed that these monkeys have come up with such an effective way to avoid getting all captured. This fight is *seriously* difficult.

This strategy, though, requires constantly sacrificing troops as long as they keep employing it. They may be advancing, but their number is steadily decreasing. Since the giant monkeys appeared, I haven't seen any new reinforcements, and at the rate they're going, the monkeys' force will be annihilated well before they can reach me. If the giant monkeys don't do anything, that is.

I've been constantly keeping an eye on the giant monkeys. Even while I'm busy fighting the other monkeys, I have to be constantly vigilant. This is brain-

bendingly exhausting work, and my Concentration skill has leveled up as a result.

Now, one of the giant monkeys are finally making a move, the one with the lowest level. It turns away and starts to move back a few steps. I'd like to say that it was leaving, but, alas, the world isn't that kind. It spins around to face me, then starts charging straight forward towards the wall.

Seriously?! Sirens scream in my brain as I realize what might be going on. I frantically start to make plans for a counterattack.

The monkey does exactly what I feared it was going to. It charges forward to just before the pile of fallen threads, then jump straight over it. Worse, its stupendously powerful leap carries it straight through the air to me in an instant.

I fling my barely-completed throwing net at the flying monkey. I catch it by surprise, with no way to dodge the net in mid-air. The monkey's trajectory is deflected slightly downward by the net, and it crashes into the wall right below me with a dull thud. It sticks to the wall, tangled up in my net and stunned.

It recovers in an instant and starts struggling with all its might to escape my net. I waste no time in layering more silk on top of it, pinning it in place, and using Poison Synthesis to make more Spider Venom and drop it in its enormous mouth. The monkey thrashes against both my threads and my poison. It didn't die after one dose of poison, so I impatiently synthesize another. The glob of poison drops cleanly into its enormous, waiting mouth.

“Experience requirements met. Small Taratekt, you have grown from level 7 to level 8. Every ability score has been increased. Acquired bonus skill proficiencies from leveling up: your skill [Visible Spectrum Expansion (LV 1)] skill has been raised to level 2 and your skill [Acid Resistance (LV 3)] has been raised to level 4. You have acquired additional skill points.”

I gained a level, so it seems like the giant monkey's used up the last of its strength. I fling my molting skin off of me as quickly as I possibly can. I still don't have the luxury of letting my guard down.

I look back at the invading monkeys crawling up the wall, and see that another of the giant monkeys is there with them.

It looks like this one took advantage of the distraction of the flying monkey and climbed up the wall along the same route the other monkeys were taking. So fast! It was down on the ground just moments ago, and now it's already far up the wall. It mercilessly crushes the monkeys along its path, using them to fling himself higher. With the incredible strength of its powerful legs and arms, it covers the distance to me in an instant.

In a panic, I fire off strands of silk towards the oncoming giant. Despite the fact that it was flying straight up a vertical wall, it quickly dodged to one side. Unfortunately for it, the direction it dodged hadn't yet been covered by the road of monkeys. The wall in that direction is covered thickly in my webbing.

The giant monkey sticks to the wall. It immediately starts struggling to rip itself free, but it looks like even a giant monkey's strength isn't enough to break free of my silk. Instead, the wall itself starts to make a disturbing sound.

Of course, there's no way I'd allow anything like that to continue. I immediately lay down more silk, covering its entire body. For now, I should be able to leave this one be.

I immediately start looking around again. Two of the giants have already moved, the third must be close behind. My guess is correct, and I locate the third giant monkey immediately.

It's right next to me, with its enormous mouth yawning open, about to snap shut on me.

!?! Now is not the time for me to be concerned about falling, or anything like that. Or, rather, I moved purely on reflex, with no time at all to think. I leap from my scaffolding, diving into empty space.

Avoiding it entirely is impossible. The monkey crunches down on all of the legs on my right side, as well as a chunk of my body itself. My health meter empties in an instant. Blinding pain rips through me, and my consciousness flickers. If I pass out now, though, I'm never going to wake up again.

Mid-air, I frantically fire off my silk. A line of it sticks to the wall and saves me from plummeting. The whiplash, however, slams me straight into the wall, and my awareness dims once more. I grit my fangs and rein in my fleeing consciousness.

“Proficiency requirements met. You have gained the skill [Fainting Resistance (LV 1)].”

I somehow manage to stay conscious, although I have no idea if it's because of my new skill. I reorient myself and look up at where my scaffolding had been.

The third giant monkey has ripped apart my structure, but in doing so has gotten tangled up in the ruined silk. It's only natural. There's no way I'd just make an ordinary scaffold. I would, of course, build scaffolding that would turn into a trap when I needed it. I didn't expect that it would be torn apart in one blow, though.

I make my way back up the wall. Half of my legs are gone, so I have to use Thread Manipulation to drag myself up. I haul myself above the thrashing monkey, then use Thread Manipulation to bind it firmly in place. I synthesize some Spider Venom, and force the monkey to gulp it down.


“Experience requirements met. Small Taratekt, you have grown from level 8 to level 9. Every ability score has been increased. Acquired bonus skill proficiencies from leveling up: your skill [Automatic HP Recovery (LV 2)] skill has been raised to level 3, your skill [Vitality (LV 1)] has been raised to level 2, your skill [Alacrity (LV 1)] has been raised to level 2, and your skill [Endurance (LV 1)] has been raised to level 2. You have acquired additional skill points.”











I molt again, after I level up. Whooof. I seriously thought I was going to die. That was seriously dangerous, just now! If I hadn't been able to level up just now, I might have legit died for real!

But, this is it. It looks like number two is slowly starting to struggle free, so I pile some more silk on top of it. The rest of the monkeys haven't gotten anywhere near as close as I thought they would, since the safe path they'd worked so hard to build had been crushed by the giant. I should be able to make up for the time I lost when the giant monkeys attacked. They might still have yet another piece in reserve, but I can't see a way for them to swing this in their favor again.

I say that, but I'm not going to get careless here. My carelessness has led to so much pain for me so far, so it's only natural. I'm not going to lose focus here, not until this battle's finished.

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060The Conclusion of the Hundred-Meter High Onslaught

I'm A Spider, So What? – 060

The Conclusion of the Hundred-Meter High Onslaught

I watch as the remaining monkeys tangle themselves in my webs. No matter how hard they strain, I am just barely out of the reach of their outstretched hands. I bind those hands in silk, and stop each monkey from moving entirely.

I look around my surroundings. Everywhere I look, I see monkeys, captured in my webs. There aren't any left who can still move around. Just to be safe, I look down at the ground below, but it seems like no more reinforcements are coming. It doesn't sound like it either, when I listen closely.

I have finally taken out every single one of these monkeys.

This is an amazing thing, but I can't yet let thoughts like that slacken my focus. I may have taken them all out of the fight, but I have yet to actually kill them all. Below me, so many monkeys have been caught in my webs that it's actually a huge pain to try to count them all. Bundled up in there with them is the conspicuous form of the one surviving giant monkey.

That last giant monkey is still trying to rip itself free. Realistically, it can apply more force than my silk can handle. It's not going to give way immediately, but if I leave it alone for a while it'll eventually break out. For now, whenever it's looked like it was getting close, I've added more silk to make sure that it stays put.

I had to keep the giant monkey still while I was intercepting the other monkeys. This turned out to be way harder than I had expected. I'm glad I didn't let myself relax after I had defeated the first two giant monkeys. Keeping this thing

restrained took way more of my strength than I could have imagined, and now my mana and stamina have both been exhausted.

I haven't finished it off yet. Ultimately, it's still alive because I haven't yet had enough spare time to actually kill it. With the rest of the monkeys still coming, I didn't really have any time to devote to it. On top of that, it's stuck on the route the rest of the monkeys were using to get to me. If I wanted to slay the giant monkey, I'd have to get closer to the rest of them, and that kind of suicidal action is something I simply cannot do.

My biggest fear was that the regular monkeys would try to help the giant monkey escape from its bindings. It's definitely possible that the giant monkey could break its way out of my webs if it had assistance from the other monkeys, so I was really concerned. Unexpectedly, they didn't do it. These monkeys, who have been suicidally ruthless in pursuing whatever path it took to come and kill me, somehow decided not to free the giant monkey, even though it would have been the most effective strategy. I'm super relieved, but I have no idea why they act like they do.

Well, I say that, but really, I have no idea why they were even attacking me in the first place. I don't think they thought of me as food, so I really have no idea why they'd attack me like that. The only thing I can think of is that maybe they showed up to avenge the one monkey I'd killed a little while ago, but to go this far to do that... naaah.

Umf. Even if I keep thinking about it, it's no use. I just can't understand how a monster thinks.

First things first, I finish off the giant monkey. As you might expect, I'm not nearly brave enough to approach such a dangerous creature so that I can attack it with my fangs. Instead, I did what I'd done with the other two: got above it and used Poison Synthesis to pour Spider Venom down its throat. The monkey, after swallowing two shots' worth, goes limp and lifeless.

Now that the biggest threat has been dealt with, I go and finish off the rest of the monkeys one by one with my Poison Fang. Poison Fang does cost a little stamina with every use, but I'm not really worried at the moment. The cost is extremely low, and I don't think I've ever managed to run completely out of stamina before.

But seriously, there are too many monkeys. Even Poison Fang is going to run out before all of those monkeys can die. I didn't really have a choice, so I stopped for a moment halfway through to eat one of the monkeys and regain a little stamina.

Even though they can't move at all, the monkeys still try to intimidate me whenever I approach. Their shrieks seem to have a little bit of fear mixed in there, but I don't really care. Hey, you guys, you were the ones who picked a fight with me! At least be prepared to die for it. Don't start crying when it's your time to die.

So, paying them no mind, I finish the rest of them off.

“Requirements have been met. You have earned the title [Merciless], and have been awarded the skills [Corruption Magic (LV 1)] and [Corruption Resistance (LV 1)]. Your new skill, [Corruption Magic (LV 1)], has been integrated with your existing skill, [Corruption Magic (LV 2)].”

Oh, looks like I got a title. Another dangerous-sounding one, at that. This is the second one that's given me Corruption Magic, huh. I can't help but express my dissatisfaction here. I'm not evil! I swear!

Well, for now, let's wait to look at these new skills. I leveled up a ton during that fight, and I wasn't able to take the time to check my new skills then either. Once I have some free time, I'll sit down and examine them all.

“Experience requirements met. Small Taratekt, you have grown from level 9 to level 10. Every ability score has been increased. Acquired bonus skill proficiencies from leveling up: your skill [Poison Synthesis (LV 2)] skill has been raised to level 3, your skill [Throwing (LV 2)] has been raised to level 3, and your skill [Mana Pool (LV 1)] has been raised to level 2. You have acquired additional skill points.”

“Level requirement met. Small Taratekt, you are eligible for evolution.”

My level goes up in the middle of grinding my way through getting rid of these monkeys. Ah, is that so? I'm level ten already, huh? ...Whoa!

Sure, I leveled up a ton while I was battling, but is it seriously already time to evolve?!

“You have a choice in evolutionary forms. Please choose between [Taratekt] and [Small Poison Taratekt].”

Hm? I expected that I’d get an option to drop “small” from my species and become just a regular Taratekt, but “Small Poison Taratekt”? Does the “poison” part mean that it’s a more venomous species?

Well, I’ll put one off too, for a little bit. There’s no way that I can evolve out here, exposed like this, in such an unsafe space. I’ve got to hurry up and finish cleaning these guys up.


“Requirements have been met. You have earned the title [Monster Slaughterer], and have been awarded the skills [Greater Strength (LV 1)] and [Greater Toughness (LV 1)]. Your existing skill, [Strength (LV 3)], has been integrated with your new skill, [Greater Strength (LV 1)], and your existing skill, [Toughness (LV 3)], has been integrated with your new skill, [Greater Toughness (LV 1)].”




Hmm? Another title? And yet another dangerous-sounding one, too. Is this the one that comes after Monster Slayer? My Strength and Toughness skills got integrated with different skills? I absolutely cannot forget to figure out what that all means when I’m done with this task.





So, after that, I went back to the boring, boring work of disposing of the rest of these monkeys. Poison Fang, then Poison Fang, and then, occasionally, taking a break to have a snack and reinforce my webs.

And, so, just like that, every living thing besides me wound up dead.

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S09Skill Points

I'm A Spider, So What? – S09

Skill Points

Katia and I are lazing around. A little while ago, the two of us had been doing a bunch of exercise in the castle's sporting ground to work on leveling up our skills. We're finished with that for now, so we're taking some time to just relax.

"Maaan, I'm wiped," says Katia. "My magic skills are really getting up there, but my physical stats are nowhere near that level."

Since Sue is, for once, not here with us, Katia is speaking in Japanese. When it's just the two of us alone, we usually talk in Japanese like this.

"Tell me about it," I reply. "Still, though, our reflexes are way better than they were in our previous world. The more we train, the better we get."

"Yeah, I know, I know. I always used to wonder what we were supposed to get out of the track and field days that our school kept doing, but here, the more I run, the more my stamina grows."

In this world, the more you train, the more your stats increase, thanks to stat-affecting skills. Since we're not able to level up right now, the only thing that we can do if we want to improve our stats is train more and more. If we keep steadily training, though, we will definitely get stronger. All this training may be difficult, but if I keep reminding myself that it's for my own benefit, I can keep pulling through.

"So? What are you up to?" asks Katia.

"Alacrity, Endurance, Strength, Toughness, and Speed are all up to level eight," I say, Appraising myself with a Gem of Appraisal.

This Gem of Appraisal is the ninth-level one belonging to the Duke's household, Katia's family. A gem like this is so valuable that some countries might even call

it a national treasure, yet Katia just blithely brought it with her when she came over. I have to wonder if the Duke's household is really okay with this, but since it's here, I might as well use it.

"Seriously, dude, you're climbing the ranks way too quickly. Is this just raw talent...?" Katia mutters, bitterly.

Although we've honestly been following the same training regimen, my skills have been leveling up faster than Katia's. In this world, anyone who wants to put the effort in can become strong, but the rate of growth varies from person to person. This is the result of individual talent.

"Ever since I was reborn into the Duke's family, people have been calling me a prodigy! And, still, there's this huge difference in our growth rates. You cheater."

Katia looks away, resentment in her eyes. Even if you say that, what am I supposed to do about it?

"Oh, by the way," she says, "have you used any of your skill points?"

"Nah, I never got around to it, so I still have all of them."

Skill points are a kind of currency that you can use to purchase new skills without first having to train up your proficiency. Normally, you're not supposed to be born with any, but since Katia and I were reincarnated from another world, we started out with quite a few.

"Stockpiling a hundred thousand points... you bourgeoisie, cheating bastard."

"Whoa, you're getting mean."

I mean, I really have never gotten around to spending them. A while ago, I was thinking about spending them on a few magic skills, but Anna told me not to use any magic. There was no way that Anna knew that I had skill points to spend, of course, but I still felt that going behind her back to learn magic anyway was some kind of betrayal. Since then, I really haven't had any desire to spend any of my points.

"Then, Katia, did you spend yours?"

"...Only a thousand."

If I remember correctly, Katia had fifty thousand points. From the way she asked

the question, I thought she might have used them all up, but she's barely touched them.

"What did you get?" I ask.

"...Keep it a secret."

"What? Haha, okay, just tell me."

"...You're absolutely not going to laugh at me?"

"I won't! Tell me!"

"...Appraisal."

I managed not to laugh, but I probably made a really strange face in the process. Appraisal is the textbook example of a skill that you should never deliberately obtain. I'm suddenly curious as to why she'd do such a thing.

"Why would you do that?"

"Well, so, it's the way the reincarnation trope works in light novels. Look, you're in an alternate universe, so it's hard to gather any information, right? So, the trope says that an appraisal skill is top-tier OP, and I thought that I should only be so lucky..."

"Wait, wait. If someone were to write up a list of all the skills that you should absolutely never take, Appraisal would be at the top. Why, after all of the warnings, would you take it anyway?"

"Like. I'm. Trying. To. Say, I picked Appraisal up when I was a baby, before I'd heard any of that! Right when I had just been reincarnated, before I even knew left from right, I desperately wanted to know anything about what was going on. So, I started thinking about appraisal skills, and then all of a sudden I heard Divine Words in my head! You can't seriously blame me for acquiring it on an impulse, after all that."

I understood her immediately. I definitely remember how terrified I was when I was still a baby and had no idea what was going on. I couldn't understand anything that anyone was saying around me, which only made it worse. I completely understand how hearing the Divine Words speaking in perfect Japanese would make you want to cling to them.

"So, is Appraisal really as shitty as they say?"

"Yeaah. Massively shitty. Since it's low-level, it's basically useless, and it makes my head hurt. On top of that, if you don't put in the time, your proficiency will never increase, and it'll never gain any levels. I have been

patiently grinding it out with every moment of my free time, but I've only ever managed to get it up to level four. My heart is going to break!"

I'm getting tired of just hearing about it. Using the Gem of Appraisal, I Appraise my own list of skills. The list that then gets displayed shows all of the skills that I'm able to acquire, as well as how many points it would cost me to purchase them. I search through the list, looking for Appraisal.

"Ah, it looks like it'll cost me a hundred points to buy it."

"Wait, seriously?"

A hundred points is the smallest number you can spend on a skill. Hundred-point skills are either skills with very little effect or skills that you would have a high affinity with. Since Katia spend a thousand points on it, I'm not sure that Appraisal is a skill with little effect after all. It may be fairly worthless when its level is low, but it would definitely be really useful at higher levels. So, it seems likely that I simply have a high affinity for Appraisal.


I thought about it for a minute, then acquired Appraisal. I now only have ninety-nine thousand, nine hundred skill points remaining.






"Kay, bought Appraisal," I say.



"Wait, seriously?" Katia says, exactly as she did just a moment ago. "Don't cry about it later."

For now, I'll save the rest of my skill points until I really need them.

[prev](#) • [next](#)

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061I'm evolving!!! (part 2)

I'm a Spider, So What? – 061

I'm evolving!!! (part 2)

Alright, annihilating those monkeys was great and all, but... now what? Everything around me is pretty quiet. Even though we were being so noisy just a little while ago, none of the other monsters have decided to drop by. Maybe it's the opposite; maybe since we were being so noisy, everything else has decided to stay clear.

Well, whatever, I can put off figuring that out for a bit. For now, I'm going to build another simple home up near the ceiling. I can't really say that it's perfectly safe, buuut it will probably be able to keep the weaker monsters from approaching.

Honestly, I really think I should evolve immediately. I don't really know how long I black out for while I'm evolving, but last time I felt like it wasn't a super huge duration. This is just my intuition, though; I can't rely on it for sure.

Regardless, either way, evolving leaves the door wide open for danger to follow. So, a time like this seems absolutely terrible for evolution... if you disregard the huge pile of food I've managed to collect. To evolve, or not to evolve... definitely evolve.

On top of that, if I don't evolve, I might be stuck at a max level of ten. I did put an end to a considerable number of monkeys after I leveled, but I still haven't leveled any further. This would be alright if I merely haven't earned enough experience points to level, but there's the distinct possibility that I just might not be able to grow any more if I don't level.

The problem, you know, is picking what thing I should evolve into: Taratekt or Poison Taratekt.

Hmmmmmm. I can't decide! Last time, the choice between being "Lesser" or normal was pretty obvious, but now, things are nowhere near as clear. A Taratekt is probably the adult version of what I am now. I don't know what kinds of changes that would involve, though... Poison, I also have no clue about. If it lives up to its name, it'll make all of my venom-based skills stronger, but then what about everything else?

I'm stuuuumped. Maaaaan, it would be great if I could just use Appraisal at a time like this...

Wait, could I?

Hm? What's that alert message-looking thing underneath my stat bars? Huhhh? "Evolution possible"? What the heck? The words "evolution possible" are blinking. Hmmmm?

Just in case, I drop another Appraisal on it.

Evolution available: **Taratekt** or **Small Poison Taratekt**.

What... the heck?! Miss Appraisal, are you seriously...?! You're the best! Woohoo! Now I can appraise things before I choose to evolve!

Maaan, Appraisal has been really outdoing herself lately. Now then, Appraisal says:

***Taratekt:** A standard adult specimen of the species of spider monsters known as the Taratekt. Its carnivorous fangs drip with venom.*

***Small Poison Taratekt:** A young specimen of a rare subspecies of the species of spider monsters known as the Taratekt. It carries an extremely powerful venom.*

Well, that decides it. It's got to be poison.

Why? It's a "rare subspecies", you know? Rare. Capital-R Rare. If I'm given a choice between something ordinary and something rare, there's no question that I'm going to pick rare, riiight? I'm Japanese! I'm weak to words like "rare" or "limited".

Well, now that that's decided, I've got to finish making this simple home. Ah, but I don't have very much stamina left... I'll eat this conveniently-located monkey, and refill it.

...Whoof, done. Now then, let's give this another try.

Whooooa, what could that be, up there on that otherwise barren wall?! What a splendidly prominent spiderweb!

This time, I'm not using any rocks. Even if I wanted to, all of the dead monkeys glued to the wall around here makes camouflage basically worthless.


But, man, I'm tired, physically and mentally. I fought such a ridiculously tough battle, so of course I'm exhausted. Blacking out from evolving is probably different from sleeping, but it still feels like resting.





“Small Taratekt, you are now evolving into a Small Poison Taratekt.”





Right. So, with that, good night.

**“Evolution has completed. You have become a Small Poison Taratekt. Every ability score has been increased. Acquired bonus skill proficiencies from evolving: your skill [Poison Fang (LV 8)] has been raised to level 9, your skill [Spider Thread (LV 8)] has been raised to level 9, your skill [Thread Manipulation (LV 7)] has been raised to level 8, your skill [Concentration (LV 4)] has been raised to level 5, your skill [Appraisal (LV 7)] has been raised to level 8, your skill [Corruption Magic (LV 2)] has been raised to level 3, your skill [Shadow Magic (LV 1)] has been raised to level 2, your skill [Poison Magic (LV 1)] has been raised to level 2, your skill [Poison Resistance (LV 7)] has been raised to level 8, your skill [Petrification Resistance (LV 2)] has been raised to level 3, your skill [Fainting Resistance (LV 1)] has been raised to level 2, and your skill [Corruption Resistance (LV 1)] has been raised to level 2. From evolving, you have earned the skill [Poison Attack (LV 5)]. [Poison Fang (LV 9)] has been integrated into [Poison Attack (LV 5)], raising its level to 9. You have acquired additional skill points.”

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062Poisonous Spider

I'm A Spider, So What? – 062

Poisonous Spider

Good morning. I was able to sleep peacefully. So, I guess I must have evolved successfully, huh. Mrgh. Just like last time, I'm ridiculously hungry, to the point where I'm feeling sluggish. As I planned, it's time for me to eat the monkeys I'd stocked away as food.

I pop my head out of my simple home and glance around. Right, right! Nothing's out there. Safety confirmed!! Well then, let's get out there and eat every last bite, huh? Time to dig in.

Now then, while I'm eating, let's check up on my stats or whatever. While I was in combat, my skills kept grinding their way up, and I think I even got some new ones. I also think I'll have gotten a lot of things from evolving. So, the survey says...:

Small Poison Taratekt — LV 1 — (no name)

Statistics:

HP: 56/56 (green)

MP: 1/56 (blue)

SP: 54/56 (yellow), 1/56 (red)

Avg. Offense: 38

Avg. Defense: 38

Avg. Magic Power: 27

Avg. Resistance: 27

Avg. Speed: 537

Skills:

[Automatic HP Recovery (LV 3)] • [Poison Attack (LV 9)] • [Poison

Synthesis (LV 3)] • [Spider Silk (LV 9)] • [Severing Thread (LV 4)] • [Thread Manipulation (LV 8)] • [Throw (LV 3)] • [Concentration (LV 5)] • [Aiming (LV 4)] • [Evasion (LV 2)] • [Appraisal (LV 8)] • [Detection (LV 4)] • [Stealth (LV 6)] • [Corruption Magic (LV 3)] • [Shadow Magic (LV 2)] • [Poison Magic (LV 2)] • [Overeating (LV 4)] • [Night Vision (LV 10)] • [Visible Spectrum Expansion (LV 2)] • [Poison Resistance (LV 8)] • [Paralysis Resistance (LV 3)] • [Petrification Resistance (LV 3)] • [Acid Resistance (LV 4)] • [Decay Resistance (LV 3)] • [Fainting Resistance (LV 2)] • [Fear Resistance (LV 6)] • [Corruption Resistance (LV 2)] • [Ignore Pain] • [Pain Tolerance (LV 6)] • [Vitality (LV 2)] • [Mana Pool (LV 2)] • [Alacrity (LV 2)] • [Endurance (LV 2)] • [Greater Strength (LV 1)] • [Greater Toughness (LV 1)] • [Kartikaya (LV 2)] • [Taboo (LV 2)] • []

Skill points available: 200

Oh? Ohh!!!

My stats went up... yeah, there's definitely an increase. I was expecting a much more dramatic change, seeing as how I just evolved, buuuuut, as usual, it looks like only my speed has really increased. It's just my speed that's this unbelievably high, huhhh... Hmm, I wonder how fast I can go, if I charge forward at full throttle? It looks like I'll just be able to run away from fights, assuming I'm against a normal enemy.

My skills have also leveled... ..Hm? What's actually changed from before evolution? Hmmm, making me fall asleep and miss everything that happens while I'm out is really unfair. There isn't a system log somewhere, is there?

I expected my stamina to go down like it did, but my mana emptied out too. I didn't notice that last time... Well, I'm using my mana way more now than I did back then. I've been pouring a lot into Thread Manipulation, and now I've also got Poison Synthesis, which was really useful in that last fight.

No, seriously, Poison Synthesis was *extremely* useful back there. I thought it was a little bit iffy when I first got it, but it's come in handy waaay more often than I expected. I'm going to have to try finding some other creative uses for it. Oh, that reminds me; I think its skill level went up, so maybe it can synthesize new kinds of poison now.

Poison Synthesis Menu:

Weak Poison

Spider Venom (LV 9)

Damage adjustment, duration adjustment

Hm? There aren't any new kinds of poison, but there's new stuff under it. "Damage adjustment" and "duration adjustment"...?

Damage adjustment: *Modifies the strength of the poison-type damage.*

Duration adjustment: *Modifies the duration over which the poison's effect is applied.*

Hmmf. So, now I can control both the strength of the poison as well as how long it continues to apply damage after it's in my target's system?

To test this out, I'll try modifying my Weak Poison. The damage and duration numbers are listed now, with a plus/minus column for adjustments. Right now, both stats are at plus zero. I try increasing the damage until I cap it out, at a maximum of plus three.

Okay, I think I get it. I should be able to customize my poisons freely now. When I want to make someone suffer for a long time, I can extend the duration, and when I want to deal a lot of damage at once, I can increase the strength. I'll be able to make whatever poison I want.

It does, however, look like there's a limit to how much I can customize it, probably based on the skill's level. Just to confirm, I try modifying my Spider Venom, but I can't raise its damage any higher than its default of nine.

I think that I'm going to get more and more ways to customize my poisons as my skill level starts to go up, which means I'll be able to use exactly the right poison for any particular situation. Oh man! Poison Synthesis's stock prices are skyrocketing!

Let's move on to the rest of my poison-related skills. Poison Fang has disappeared, and seems to have become Poison Attack instead.

Poison Attack: *Applies poison-type damage to an attack.*

Ummm? Huh? Does this... mean I can apply poison to literally all of my attacks? Eh? Isn't that terrifyingly good? If it's like that, well, that means I can apply poison to my threads, right? Huh? Isn't this way too absurdly powerful? I've already been cheating my way through fights using Spider Silk, but making it this much more powerful? Is this okay? Is this really okay?

...I'm going to have to run some experiments as soon as I have my Stamina back.

Oh, Poison Magic's level went up, too! It's poison-related, so let's check this out.

Poison Magic: *Magic that manipulates poison. The spells that may be cast are dependent on skill level. Available spells: Poison Touch (LV 1), Poison Bolt (LV 2)*


Poison Bolt: *Fires a projectile at the target, dealing poison-type damage.*



Ah, a ranged attack! A very standard ranged attack. I want to use iiiit... but I caaaaaan't..... Seriously, how do I use magic?








Right. Next, we have Poison Resistance. This is the last poison-related one, right? Wow, as expected of a rare poison-type species, all of my poison skills went up significantly. Especially Poison Attack! I am going to have to start messing around with that as soon as I get my stamina back. If it really is as terrifying as I think it is, my combat ability just exploded.

My stats may not have gone up very much, but my skills definitely made up for it. Since I'm so heavily reliant on my skills, maybe I should focus on raising those instead of trying to boost up my stats.

[prev](#) • [next](#)

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063Miss... no, wait, M'lady Appraisal!!

I'm A Spider, So What? – 063

Miss... no, wait, M'lady Appraisal!!

“Proficiency requirements met. Your skill, [Overeating (LV 4)] has been raised to level 5.”

Oh! While I've been gorging myself on these monkeys, Overeating's level went up. Well! If I'm eating this much, yeah, it'll go up. I'm up to the triple digits in monkey consumption by now, right? Yet still, my belly has yet to start swelling. This is all thanks to both the effects of Overeating and the strange phenomena that happens right after I evolve, but, seriously, where is all of this food going?

On top of that, even though I've already eaten so much, I feel like I can still eat even more! Long story short, I've been tearing into these monkeys with gusto.

While I've been eating, I checked up on all of my other, non-poison-related skills as well. I got a ton of new skill levels! Thread Manipulation and Spider Silk nearly doubled in level. Couple that with my new Poison Attack skill, and these are turning into some really powerful skills that I can absolutely rely on.

Getting Spider Silk to level up was already difficult, but once it started getting up there, it was seriously impossible to get it to rise any further. I am waaaay too excited that it finally leveled up!

And Concentration leveled up too! I'm pretty sure it was way lower-leveled than this before I battled those monkeys. That fight was extremely chaotic and required intense concentration, so of course I earned a good amount of skill proficiency. The more practical experience I have putting something to use, the more my proficiencies go up, it seems. Aiming seems to keep going up a lot, so that's probably the case.

Now that I think about it, when I was hiding from the Earth Dragon, my Stealth

and Fear Resistance skills shot up at a ridiculous rate. I was literally on the brink of death there.

Next is... oh, two of my other magic skills besides Poison Magic went up. Let's see!

Corruption Magic: Magic that directly affects the soul. The spells that may be cast are dependent on skill level. Available spells: Disquiet (LV 1), Phantom Pain (LV 2), Phantom Insanity (LV 3)

Shadow Magic: A low-rank Darkness magic that manipulates shadows. The spells that may be cast are dependent on skill level. Available spells: Deepen Shadow (LV 1), Widen Shadow (LV 2)

Phantom Insanity: Implants madness directly into the soul of the target.

Widen Shadow: Manipulate the size of a shadow.

How should I put this... Corruption Magic sounds, uh, really evil. What's this? Implant madness? Like, force someone to go insane? That's waaaay too nasty.

I want to use iiiit...

But, Shadow Magic, on the other hand, is, ah... questionable. This new spell and the first-level Deepen Shadow spell feel like they're completely useless unless I combine them with higher-level spells. It's not like I can use it right now anyway, but this seems super difficult to level up. I mean, how could you possibly use it in combat like this? It's not like I can use it right now anyway! This is so important that I have to say it twice!

My various resistances went up as well. Let's take a look at my new Fainting Resistance and Corruption Resistance skills, though. There's a decent chance that the name and the actual ability are going to be a little different, like Decay Resistance was. Actually, when I just look at the name "Corruption Resistance", there's no way that I wouldn't have to ask what the heck it actually is.

Fainting Resistance: Makes it more difficult to faint.

Corruption Resistance: Increases defenses against effects that directly target the soul.

Well, that's about as expected. Yeah... Corruption Resistance seems straightforward, but Fainting Resistance... would that apply to, say, sleep-inducing attacks? Ah, well, I don't even know if sleep attacks are even a thing. If

they did exist, wouldn't there be a Sleep Resistance? What exactly is Fainting Resistance useful for? Eh... well, if I do encounter any sleep-inducing attacks, I'll just have to avoid relying on Fainting Resistance.

Hmf. Next is Vitality and Mana Pool, then Greater Strength and Greater Toughness. I'm pretty sure I can guess what they are, though...

Vitality: Increases HP based on skill level.

Mana Pool: Increases MP based on skill level.

Greater Strength: Increases physical attack power based on ten times the skill level. In addition, when leveling up, provides an additional increase to physical attack power based on the skill level.

Greater Toughness: Increases physical resistance based on ten times the skill level. In addition, when leveling up, provides an additional increase to physical resistance based on the skill level.

Yep, just as I thought: stat-raising skills. I'm really happy about Greater Strength and Greater Toughness, though. I figured that they'd increase my stats, since they integrated Strength and Toughness into them when I got it, but I didn't expect to see extra increases on level up like what Kartikeya gives me. Yeah, the Monster Slaughterer title really does seem like the upgrade to Monster Slayer; since Monster Slayer got me Strength and Toughness to start with.

This might be a little selfish, but I kinda wish that Strength and Toughness hadn't gotten integrated. With my stats as weak as they are, every tiny little boost helps. Defense, especially. I was soooo close to dying during that monkey battle. Hmmmm. Well, the skill proficiency got integration too, so it'll level up more quickly, right? When I think about it that way, I guess integration was probably for the best...? Well, not like I can do anything about it either way.

Now then. The last thing. Yep, the last thing. I put this one off. Yeah, it's only natural. After all, when I just started out with it, it just betrayed my expectations over and over. Lately, though, it seemed like it was actually starting to turn around, but... when it had finally, *finally* started to live up to my expectations, *this* happens. You can understand that I'd be disappointed, right?

Right, Miss Appraisal?

Your level went up, you know? Why didn't you get any better? Well, I guess it's maybe alright? After all, I can see skill points in my status, I guess... it's

convenient? But you've been rocketing forward so quickly lately, so this kinda seems like a ripoff? Did you maybe get a little carried away? Hey, what's the deal?

Haaaah. No waaaaay. It's been a while, I can say it again, right?

Uuuuuseless.

Aaaaaargh. Well, being able to see my skill points is convenient, so I guess I can put up with this. While I'm at it, I guess I'll appraise my skill points. I've been using them without really knowing what they are, so getting the executive summary would be nice. So, *click*?


Huh, a ton of rows of text just popped up. What the heck? Well, let's take a look at these...








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Miss... no, wait, M'lady Appraisal! Please forgive my impertinent words just now! I realize now your greatness! I was such a fool to not have comprehended this earlier! I beg of you, forgive me!!

On the display that popped up is a list of all the skills that I can acquire with my current skill points.

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064M'lady Appraisal, you really are quite brilliant.

I'm A Spider, So What? – 064

M'lady Appraisal, you really are quite brilliant.

Appraisal really is amazing. This new display is a catalog of all of the skills I can acquire, each labeled with their point cost. Right now, I have two hundred points. Since skills cost a minimum of one hundred points, I can either buy two one hundred point skills or one two hundred point skill.

Well, whatever! What's really important is that now I have a list of skills that I haven't yet acquired. And, since it's a display, I can double-appraise them all. In other words, without having to first acquire a skill, I can look its effects up in advance! Magnificent!

With this, I can look around for useful skills. No longer do I need to worry over whether or not the skill I'm about to buy will be useless. On top of that, I might be able to find skills that I could start trying to earn by gaining proficiency, rather than spending skill points on them directly. The possibilities here are endless.

Now then, for now let's go down the list and Appraise every single one of these skills, shall we?

“Proficiency requirements met. Your skill, [Overeating (LV 5)] has been raised to level 6.”

I've been continuing to eat as I appraise, and Overeating's level just went up again. There are still a ton of monkeys left to eat, but my stomach's still not anywhere close to its limit. This stomach's amazing. Is there a “Extradimensional Belly” title or something?

Hoo. This is magnificent. This display is basically an illustrated reference guide to skills. If I save up three hundred points, the list will get bigger, right? Yeah, definitely. But I'd need to raise my level a ton, huh... My level went up a ton while I was having that idiotic fight to the death against those monkeys, but normally it goes up waaay more slowly than that.

Hmm, if I do wind up spending these points, the skills on display here now will probably disappear. That would be a pain. If there's a really good skill, though, I want to get it... what a dilemma.

What to do... should I buy a new skill, or should I hold on to my points? Guh, how troubling.

I've already finished going through all of the skills in the list. There were a few in particular among them that caught my eye.

Mana Perception: *Allows for the perception of mana.*

Mana Manipulation: *Allows for the manipulation of mana.*

Are these two skills, just maybe, required in order to use magic? It seriously looks like that. I mean, the two of them are even displayed right next to each other! These skills are probably really effective when they're used together as a set. I can acquire them both for just two hundred points!

However, there's a big problem. I actually already have Mana Perception. It's baked into Detection. Yeah, my Detection skill already contains Mana Perception. So that means that if I do wind up buying Mana Perception after all, it'll probably just get integrated straight into Detection.

That's completely unacceptable. Or, rather, if that were to happen, I wouldn't have any hope of using magic for the rest of my life. Since it's impossible for me to activate Detection, it's thus impossible for me to activate Mana Perception. If, as I fear, both of those skills are required to use magic, this might be the end of that.

What the heck is this game-breaking bug? Ah, no, no, this isn't actually set in stone. I'm sure that, at some point, I'll be able to use magic. So, until then, I'll put this aside.

It is entirely possible that there's a skill out there that will make Detection

usable. However, I don't really know how useful it might wind up being, so I don't really want to throw any more of my valuable skill points away to try to make a bad skill good. Right now, what I want are skills that have clear and obvious effects.

I had thought about getting Poison Claw a while ago, but that's no longer necessary thanks to earning its upgrade skill, Poison Attack. There's SP Consumption Reduction, but since I have Overeating, it's not a very high priority. Rather, there's a chance that I might just earn it automatically, like how I got Automatic HP Recovery by accumulating skill proficiency.


Well, I've been putting on this big show about being troubled about this, but in reality I already have my sights set on a particular skill. The only question remaining here is if I should buy it or save my points. This skill is just that much of an obvious cut above the others... in many ways.








Pride (100): *The power of , a strength almost rivaling that of the gods. Drastically increases the rate of experience gain and skill proficiency gain, and greatly increases the rate of stat growth. Furthermore, allows for interference in the domain, surpassing the system.*

I have no clue what any of that means. The description is unintelligible, and I have no idea why a skill like this would be available for just a hundred measly points. I tried Appraising the weird vocab words like “”, “domain”, and “system”, but the results were all the same: “Impossible to Appraise”. What I *did* manage to understand is that this skill would crank up my experience and proficiency gain, as well as amplify my normal stat growth. That alone makes it well worth the points.

I seriously have no idea what to do here. A skill that's as incomprehensible as this one is seriously dangerous. I have no idea what downsides this could possibly have. Even still, the benefits are tremendous. I looked, and I could not find a single other skill to increase either experience or proficiency gain. I have no idea how large the effect on stat growth is, but from the phrasing it sounds pretty big...

Seriously, I have no idea what to do.

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065Pride

I'm A Spider, So What? – 065

Pride

Pride. The most grave of the seven deadly sins, a title reserved for the highest Demon Lord of Hell. Whenever it appears in a game, it's the name of a final boss or a powerful cursed item.

Just from the sound of its name, I imagine that taking this skill isn't going to do me any good. However, figuring out what it does is extremely tempting. It's so tempting that I really want to jump on it, even if I know it's a trap! Truly, a devil's snare.

“Proficiency requirements met. Your skill, [Overeating (LV 6)] has been raised to level 7.”

I suddenly notice that I've finished off the last of the monkeys. Wooow, I'm amazing. I ate *all* of that. My stamina, of course, is full. Coupled with the Overeating stockpile, I have a tremendous amount of energy saved up.

Come to think of it, didn't Overeating's description say something about getting fatter when I'm using it? Am I really fatter?

Hmmm. I can't say anything for sure because I can't see my entire body, but... I don't really look that fat. Oh! Now that I'm thinking about it, it really doesn't look like evolving did anything to my appearance either. Nothing really happened last time either. The Taratekt species must just not change very much, huh.

Or, maybe the changes happen gradually? Hmm, that really doesn't seem like evolution, huh... The regular and the giant monkeys were very clearly different species, huh... I really don't think that's the result of a gradual change, huh...

Well! That's enough of letting my thoughts drift off, there's more important matters to consider. The description of this Pride skill seems to overlap a lot with the mysterious skill I have. That alone makes me think that these two things couldn't possibly be unrelated. At the moment, I have no idea what this mysterious skill does. It doesn't seem to be either a positive or a negative thing... probably. Come to think of it, is there even any downside?

...It's never a good idea to just leap to a decision, but, I've made up my mind. No... my mind had already been made up from the beginning. I have a premonition, you see. This skill, I absolutely must take it. It's a very vague premonition. I must set aside my worries about the pros and cons, and get this skill. I can't shake this feeling.

“You currently possess 200 skill points. The skill [Pride] can be acquired for 100 skill points. Would you like to acquire it now?”

Yes.

“You have acquired the skill [Pride]. You have 100 skill points remaining.”

Alright. I really did it!

“Proficiency requirements met. Your skill, [Taboo (LV 2)] has been raised to level 4.”

Now I've really done it!

“Requirements have been met. You have earned the title [Lord of Pride], and have been awarded the skills [Abyssal Magic (LV 10)] and [Hell].”

Now *they've* really done it!

O... oh. How did that happen...? Wait, no, no, isn't that completely unbelievable?!

What the heck? What the heck?! I'm going to say it again! *What the heck?!!*

Taboo's level went up. Twice! I did that!

And I got a really powerful title, too. Yaaay? You know, this “Abyssal Magic”

thing really looks like an absolute top-tier magic, doesn't it? At level ten, too! That's weird, right?

...Well, for now, let's look up the descriptions of Abyssal Magic and Hell.

Small Poison Taratekt — LV 1 — (no name)

Statistics:

HP: 56/56 (green)

MP: 14/156 (blue)

SP: 54/56 (yellow), 1/56 (red)

Avg. Offense: 38

Avg. Defense: 38

Avg. Magic Power: 127

Avg. Resistance: 127

Avg. Speed: 537

Skills:

[Automatic HP Recovery (LV 3)] • [Poison Attack (LV 9)] • [Poison Synthesis (LV 3)] • [Spider Silk (LV 9)] • [Severing Thread (LV 4)] • [Thread Manipulation (LV 8)] • [Throw (LV 3)] • [Concentration (LV 5)] • [Aiming (LV 4)] • [Evasion (LV 2)] • [Appraisal (LV 8)] • [Detection (LV 4)] • [Stealth (LV 6)] • [Hell] • [Corruption Magic (LV 3)] • [Shadow Magic (LV 2)] • [Poison Magic (LV 2)] • [Abyssal Magic (LV 10)] • [Pride] • [Overeating (LV 7)] • [Night Vision (LV 10)] • [Visible Spectrum Expansion (LV 2)] • [Poison Resistance (LV 8)] • [Paralysis Resistance (LV 3)] • [Petrification Resistance (LV 3)] • [Acid Resistance (LV 4)] • [Decay Resistance (LV 3)] • [Fainting Resistance (LV 2)] • [Fear Resistance (LV 6)] • [Corruption Resistance (LV 2)] • [Ignore Pain] • [Pain Tolerance (LV 6)] • [Vitality (LV 2)] • [Mana Pool (LV 2)] • [Alacrity (LV 2)] • [Endurance (LV 2)] • [Greater Strength (LV 1)] • [Greater Toughness (LV 1)] • [Kartikeya (LV 2)] • [Taboo (LV 4)] • []

Skill points available: 100

...Wait. Wait just a second.

That's weird. My stats are... weird. When did my mana, magic power, and

resistance get so high...? They're a hundred points higher than they were just a second ago. How...?

...Is this also one of Pride's effects?

Well, you know, it's not like a stat increase is ever a *bad* thing. Yeah. Best not to dwell on it. Right! Appraise, appraise...

Abyssal Magic: *The most powerful of dark magics, able to manipulate the darkness of the Abyss itself. The spells that may be cast are dependent on skill level. Available spells: Gates of Hell (LV 1), The Hell of Nonbelievers (LV 2), The Hell of the Lustful (LV 3), The Hell of the Gluttonous (LV 4), The Hell of the Avaricious (LV 5), The Hell of the Wrathful (LV 6), The Hell of the Heretics (LV 7), The Hell of the Violent (LV 8), The Hell of the Fraudulent (LV 9), The Hell of the Traitors (LV 10)*

Hell: *Allows for the manifestation of Hell.*

A... ah...

How should I put this? This looks waaaaay too dangerous. What's with all the hell stuff? The "manifestation of Hell" in particular sounds extremely awful...

Gates of Hell: *The first gate.*

The Hell of Nonbelievers: *The hell for those innocents who did not believe.*

The Hell of the Lustful: *The hell for those who were stained with lust.*

The Hell of the Gluttonous: *The hell for those who were consumed by their appetites.*

The Hell of the Avaricious: *The hell for those who chased their greed above all else.*

The Hell of the Wrathful: *The hell for those who were controlled by their anger.*

The Hell of the Heretics: *The hell for those who spread their heresy.*

The Hell of the Violent: *The hell for those who gave themselves to violence.*


The Hell of the Fraudulent: *The hell for those who whispered lies.*










The Hell of the Traitors: *The hell for those who betrayed those who trusted them.*

And what's with this Appraisal result? It doesn't actually tell me anything about this magic. Who the hell wrote this?

...First thing I did was to test to see what Hell did, but there wasn't even a hint of a reaction. I was torn between feeling disappointed and relieved.

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S10The Second Prince

I'm a Spider, So What? – S10

The Second Prince

I watch as Sue and Clevea square off against each other, wielding practice swords. Sue strikes up at Clevea from below, making use of her small build, but Clevea parries the attack with ease. Sue continues resolutely attacking, but Clevea avoids every attack with her precise defense.

Sue's fighting style is straight-forward and powerful, despite her smaller build, while the muscular Clevea fights with fluidity and grace. Both of them move exactly the opposite of how you think they would from the impressions they give off. Sue is by no means a weak fighter, but she looks extremely unskilled next to Clevea's superior fighting experience. It's to be expected, though: Clevea possesses the upgraded version of the Sword Talent skill, Sword Genius, and has it up to level seven. Sue only has Sword Talent, and it's at level six. This is a gap that cannot be bridged.

This, however, is not a battle that could be decided in an instant, despite the large difference in stats. Sue has activated both Battle Magic and Battle Spirit. These are skills that consume mana and stamina to boost your stats. In the hands of Sue, who has a tremendous amount of mana to throw around, the stat increase isn't small at all. Sue's physical-type stats have all been considerably boosted, to the point where she might even have an advantage, stat-wise.

Clevea's operating under a handicap, not using Battle Spirit herself. If she did, she'd win in a heartbeat.

Even without using Battle Spirit, Clevea looks like she'll probably still win. Sue might have a stat advantage, but it's very slight, and that alone isn't enough to make up for the fundamental difference in skill between them. Sue has no way to turn this around.

As expected, as soon as Sue's attacks faltered, Clevea counterattacks. It strikes her squarely in the side, and she falls to the ground.

Anna, who had been waiting on the sidelines, immediately runs in and heals Sue with recovery magic. She stands up, brushing the dirt off of her clothing with a resentful look on her face.

"I lost," she says.

"Princess, if you are able to move that well at your age," says Clevea, "you will soon be able to pass me. You have incredible talent."

"I don't need your flattery."

From the sidelines, applause rings out. "It's not just flattery!" calls a voice. "It's really true, your movements are incredible."

Everyone present, myself included, looks over in surprise. None of us, not even Clevea and Anna, had noticed anyone arrive. He's been standing right next to me, and I completely failed to realize it.

"Julius!" I exclaim.

"Hey! Did I startle you?"

This man, is my older brother from the same mother, the second prince of the kingdom, Julius. He laughs merrily at his own successful prank.

"When did you get back home?" I ask. "Just yesterday," he says. "I wanted to stop by and see you, but after I met with Father and our older brother, I didn't have any more time."

Julius is fairly older than I am, and he's usually off on various missions outside the country. It's rare for him to return home like this.

"Sue, you've become even more amazing since the last time I saw you!" says Julius, warmth in his eyes. "I'm always surprised by how much you grow each time."

Sue, however, doesn't say anything at all. For whatever reason, she doesn't seem to like him very much. From my perspective, Julius is way nicer than my other two older brothers, and I like him better. I respect him above all else. Seeing my respected older brother and my beloved younger sister at such odds makes me

seriously upset.

“Sue, it’s not nice to treat your older brother like that,” I say. “Ha ha,” laughs Julius, “it’s okay! Sue’s just in a difficult stage of her life right now.”

Julius seems to be sensing something. If I factor in my age from my previous life, I’m older than Julius, but I don’t think I can possibly match up to his level of maturity.

“Hey, Shun, how about you? It’s been a while, want to train?”
“Really?!” I say. “Definitely, thanks!”

Training with Julius... I’d want nothing more.

“I’m going to borrow this,” says Julius, taking the practice sword from Clevea. “Y... yes,” she says, looking very small. It’s very unusual to see her this tense. Well, she’s dealing with Julius, so it’s very understandable.

“Right! Ready whenever you are. Come at me whatever way you want!”
“Okay!”

Immediately, I activate Battle Magic and Battle Spirit. I can’t afford to be stingy with my skill usage against Julius. I’m going to go all out.

I step forward sharply, swinging diagonally upward. Julius parries it easily, holding his sword with only one hand. I threw all of my power behind that attack, yet he blocked it easily with just a one-handed grip.

I, however, expected this. There’s no way Julius would possibly get hit by a strike like that. I immediately draw my sword back and unleash my next swing. That gets parried too.

This is fun. Even at my full power, I can’t even touch him. No matter how quick my strikes, no matter how much force I put behind them, no matter how deft my skills, I’ll never lay a single blow on him. I can’t even imagine how I could possibly manage to slip past his sword. Being able to fight against a foe so vastly superior... this is extremely fun.

No matter how much I want to continue, though, it eventually comes to an end. My Battle Magic and Battle Spirit run out. Breathing heavily, I fall to my knees.

“Hm! Shun, your attacks are straight and true, just like your endlessly stretching talent.”


“Thanks... Ju... li... us...” I gasp, bit by bit.









Even though I’m this exhausted, Julius hasn’t even broken a sweat. As expected of the Hero, the strongest man in the world.

Someday, will I be able to stand next to this man? One of my greatest dreams in this world is to someday be his equal. I can’t even come close to him now, but one day, I will definitely be strong enough that I can watch his back for him.

This is my guiding light.

[prev](#) • [next](#)

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066Skill Rush

I'm A Spider, So What? – 066

Skill Rush

Aaahh... I can't help think I've really screwed uuup... What kinds of traps lurk within this ridiculous skill... No matter how I look at it, it's weird that I'd get a new title just for learning a skill, right? And an obviously bad one, at that. Taboo leveled up, too, which is also bad...

Hmmmm. The fact that I can't immediately tell what the downsides are is pretty terrifying. Taboo doesn't seem to have any effect, and Pride isn't doing anything right now... I just really don't want to blindly stumble off the edge of a cliff.¹

Well, on the other hand, worrying about it isn't going to make anything actually happen. There's nothing I can really do now; I'll worry about it when the time comes. If, of course, I actually have time to worry...

For now, I'll save my remaining skill points. I just learned some amazing new magic that I'd really, really like to try out, but before I can do that I think I need to do something about Detection. I think I'm going to need the Mana Manipulation skill too. If that's true, then I'll need both that and some sort of skill to do something about Detection. With only a hundred points left, I can't get both.

For the time being, instead of spending anything else, I'm just going to wait until I have two hundred.

Well then, I've finished eating all of these monkeys, so I don't have anything to do here anymore. Let's get out of here. I'll start exploring along the wall again. It's really quiet, though! I can usually hear the cries of other monsters echo in the distance, but right now I can barely hear anything. There's no monsters to be seen nearby either... this is a rare moment of peace.

This is the monkeys' doing, right? Yeah, a huge crowd of them all moved in at once, so of course the other monsters would flee. That's probably it.

“Proficiency requirements met. You have gained the skill [Prediction (LV 1)].”

Hm? A skill? Show me, show me.

Prediction: *Increases analytical ability when making predictions.*

Hfmmmm. Well, it's not a bother or anything, but this isn't a particularly useful skill. It's got an effect that isn't really noticeable. It just lets me turn things over in my head faster, and only in specific circumstances. It's something I could have bought for a hundred points.

...Pride cost that much, too, though. Yeaaaah, this really is weeeird...

But, man, there's seriously not a single other monster here. I've got no sense of impending danger right now, and there's nothing awful staggering around, so it really looks like there's nobody here. Even if I focus really hard as I look around, there's nothing.

“Proficiency requirements met. You have gained the skill [Enhanced Vision (LV 1)].”

Oh? Another skill? Show me, show me.

Enhanced Vision: *Enhances the sense of sight.*

Well, ain't that straightforward! But this here's another one that I don't really need... My spider's eyes are already really good! In my previous life, I was so nearsighted that I couldn't live without my glasses, but now I can already see waaay further than I could back then. Or, rather, I should say that this is another hundred-point skill.

Now that I think about it, there were similar skills for my other five senses, right? If I earned this sight-enhancing skill by staring really hard at something, will the other skills come if I focus really hard on my other senses?

So, let's try this out immediately. First off are my ears. What are a spider's ears

like, anyway? There's so many things I don't know about myself.

Proficiency requirements met. You have gained the skill [Enhanced Hearing (LV 1)].

Ah, just as I'd hoped, I got a skill. So, let's work on the other ones.

“Proficiency requirements met. You have gained the skill [Enhanced Smell (LV 1)].”

“Proficiency requirements met. You have gained the skill [Enhanced Touch (LV 1)].”

I'll handle my sense of taste the next time I eat something. Still, these skills were super easy to get, huh... Well, my spider senses are so good that I really didn't need to put any thought into them. If I don't actually focus on them, I won't get any skill proficiency, right? Otherwise, I would have earned these long ago.

“Proficiency requirements met. Your skill, [Prediction (LV 1)] has been raised to level 2.”

Already?! I literally *just* got this skill, right?! Why the heck did I just get another level? Ah, well, that's okay. I'm not going to turn away a free level-up.

“Proficiency requirements met. You have gained the skill [Multitasking (LV 1)].”

Another one?! And, on top of that, one that might be useful for Detection, huh?!

Multitasking: *Allows the user to think about multiple things at once.*

I've been thinking that the big reason as to why I haven't been able to use Detection is that the sheer volume of incoming data overwhelms my ability to process it. So, I've been looking at skills that might bolster my processing power, and Multitasking is one of them.

Woohoo! ...How did I get this, though? I wasn't really trying to think about two things at once just now...

Ah, is it madame Appraisal? I've always been keeping her turned on. I've got a constant stream of information about my surroundings trickling into my head. I

usually let it all pass through me because I don't usually care very much, but I guess you could describe that as thinking multiple things at once. I can't think of anything else that would have done that, so that must be it.

Nn... well, all of this... isn't this a little weird? I'm gaining way too many skills. No matter what the circumstances might be, getting skills one right after the other like this is definitely strange, right?

Well, I probably know what's causing this, though.

Pride.

“Drastically increases the rate of experience gain and skill proficiency gain.”
Yep. That's it. I mean, this is totally a massive multiplier on my proficiency points, right? I can't say anything for sure because I can't actually see the numbers, but this definitely looks like a multiplier.


“Proficiency requirements met. Your skill, [Prediction (LV 2)] has been raised to level 3.”





See?







Translator's notes for this chapter:

1. The original line involved metaphorical silk being gradually wrapped around a metaphorical head, unnoticed. I've swapped out the analogy.

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067A new foe has appeared! His name: Detection!

I'm A Spider, So What? – 067

A new foe has appeared! His name: Detection!

Well then! At long last, I've finally acquired a new skill that might let me actually make use of Detection. Shall we try it out right away?

Inhale, exhale.
Alright.

Detection: on.

Groaaaah!
Too much! Too much!
Off! Offfff!

“Proficiency requirements met. Your skill, [Multitasking (LV 1)] has been raised to level 2.”

“Proficiency requirements met. Your skill, [Detection (LV 4)] has been raised to level 5.”

Inhaaaale... exhale. My head huuuurts. Ah, right. Multitasking is at level one. Based on all of my other skills so far, I really shouldn't have expected much from a level one skill. I didn't have any reason to think that this one would be different.

Multitasking's level did go up just now, but, well, so did Detection's. Nothing really matters if Detection's level goes up toooo... If it goes up, it's just going to throw even more information at me, so it's no goood... If Multitasking and Detection keep leveling up at the same rate, I'm just going to get stuck in a loop.

Detection levels up so ridiculously quickly that I gain a new skill level every time I turn it on. I'm not even getting stuck in a loop, I'm getting left in the dust. And Pride is making it level even faster, too.

Man, *seriously*, this Detection guy. What a monster. I can't do anything at all about him. To think, I've had an enemy as formidable as the Earth Dragon lurking right beside me this whole time. I don't think I can win at aaaall...

Anyhow, for now, I'm going to have wait until Multitasking levels up, huh. I don't think I'm quite able to actually think about two things at once yet, but I might be able to grind up my proficiency by thinking something while simultaneously reading Appraisal results. I could, of course, grind it up using Detection, but doing it like that would be, well, backwards.

Grrr. Well, I don't think that my basic theory is wrong. I'm still pretty sure that if I were to somehow increase my mental capabilities, I'd then be able to use Detection. Although, out of all of the skills on the list, Multitasking really was the most likely candidate, huh...

Hmmmm. Let's check the list again. I've got fewer skill points than before, so there's fewer skills listed here. Even still, there's a lot to look through. I guess... most skills can probably be bought with only a hundred skill points, right? Excluding the really effective ones and the straight-up crazy ones, of course. Hmm, well, Pride is straight-up crazy and that somehow only cost me a hundred.

If I wanted to make Detection worthwhile, then the possible skills are...

Computation: *Increases the computational power of the user's brain.*

Memory: *Strengthen's the user's memory.*

That's about it, huh? Fewer than I thought. On top of that, Memory seems like it might not actually apply very well. I guess that just leaves me with Computation, but am I really sure that I'd be able to use Detection with it?

Mmmm. Multitasking is in this sorry state, despite being the skill I thought best for the job, huh... Computation probably isn't going to be any better at low level, so buying it is pointless...

Ah, hang on. Computation is just math, right? Can't I just do a bunch of mental arithmetic and earn it that way?

Right. Well, it's not like I have anything more pressing to think about while I'm walking, so it doesn't hurt to give this a shot. Now then, shall we work out the powers of two?

Two, four, eight, sixteen, thirty-two, sixty-four...

...eight thousand, one hundred and ninety-two; sixteen thousand, three hundred and eighty-four; umm... thirty-two thousand, seven hundred and sixty-eight, right...? Man, this is getting tough. The next one is, ummmm...

“Proficiency requirements met. You have gained the skill [Computation (LV 1)].”

Oh! Good, good. Mission complete.

Hmmm. Should I give it a shot? It's probably not going to work, but if it does it'll be amazing, so... let's try it.

Inhale, exhale.
Alright.

Detection: on.

Grrabblaaagh!!
Too much! Too much!!
Off! Offfff!

“Proficiency requirements met. Your skill, [Computation (LV 1)] has been raised to level 2.”

“Proficiency requirements met. Your skill, [Multitasking (LV 2)] has been raised to level 3.” “Proficiency requirements met. Your skill, [Detection (LV 5)] has been raised to level 6.”

“Proficiency requirements met. Your skill, [Corruption Resistance (LV 2)] has been raised to level 3.”

Inhaaaale... exhale. My head huuuurts. This is impossible. No can do. My head's splitting. Pain's bad.

Aaargh, no waaaaay... Hey, where the heck is Pain Tolerance? I thought I was going to die! Why'd you let me feel such unbearable pain?! Rather, why the

heck did *Corruption Resistance* go up?! Could it be? Is the Dark Lord Detection literally attacking my very soul? “Attack” is the right word here, right? My resistance wouldn’t have gone up if it wasn’t.

Let’s be serious here. If Corruption Resistance went up, then Detection doesn’t just affect my thoughts, it’s also directly affecting my soul. Just maybe, is part of this headache coming from my soul?! Whoa, scary! Keeping this up isn’t going to wear my soul down or anything, right? I’d notice before it crippled me, right?

“Proficiency requirements met. Your skill, [Prediction (LV 3)] has been raised to level 4.”


Ah, right. I’m so glad that Prediction doesn’t apply if I’m just deducing the right answer! Saaaafe. It’s just a prediction, so I’m saaaafe. At least, that’s what I’m going with.





Hmmmm. So, does this mean that I’d be able to use Detection if I had skills that relate to the soul? There aren’t any soul-related skills on the list, though. Corruption Resistance is the only one I’ve got. Am I going to have to level it up? ...How the heck am I going to do that?









Ahhh. It’s no use. I’m just going to have to stick with my original plan of raising Multitasking and Computation. At the very least, their skill levels rose when I had Detection on, so they are doing *something* there.

So, for now, let’s seal Detection away again. Using it before I’m ready seems pretty scary now.

[prev](#) • [next](#)

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068The End of the Lower Depths

I'm A Spider, So What? – 068

The End of the Lower Depths

After I gave up for now on mastering Detection, I then turned to the thing I've been really waiting for: testing out my Spider Silk/Poison Attack combo. The results are... eh heh heh heh. Aaaahh, I really want to try this out in combat! Heh heh...

After that, I kept walking and walking. I didn't encounter any other monsters as I was walking, so everything was super peaceful. Thanks to having filled up Overeating, my stamina hasn't gone down at all, so not being able to hunt hasn't been a problem. So, the lack of any monsters made this the perfect chance to keep moving forward.

Since I was just walking, I had a bunch of free time, so I worked on grinding up the skills I could while I was moving. As a result, my sensing skills have gone up: Enhanced Sight, Hearing, Smell, and Touch are all up to level five. As a secondary effect, Concentration leveled up, and it's now at level eight. Concentration's always been relatively easy to level, but thanks to Pride's effects, it's gotten even faster.

Concentration really doesn't feel like it does much of anything, but it's actually a really amazing skill. I'm pretty sure that the only reason I was able to focus during that incredibly hectic life-or-death battle with those monkeys is because of Concentration. It may be a very plain skill, but it is a massively useful one.

So, now that my sensing skills are at level five, there's a huge difference in my capabilities. Everything that I used to be able to see is now so much clearer. If I focus, I can make out the details on the surface of the rocks far ahead of me. My sense of hearing and sense of smell are the same: I can practically hear every sound and detect every scent that floats around this labyrinth.

It's just... Enhanced Touch, well, you could say that it has its pluses and minuses. It makes me very sensitive... Ah, not in a sexy way, okay? Don't get your hopes up. If any of you idiots gets your hopes up anyway, I will personally wrap you up in silk and run you through with my Poison Fang until you die. *And*, if any of you brave souls are now going "but that would be the greatest prize of all," then, of course, I will run the heck away.

...Ahh, right, I was talking about Enhanced Touch. To be specific, it makes me sensitive enough that I can feel every air current as it flows past, which makes me really jumpy. I can get a little bit used to it after leaving it on for a while, but I'm pretty sure that I was supposed to get comfortable with it over time as it gradually leveled up. I must be feeling so uncomfortable with it because it leveled up so ridiculously quickly. Getting fully accustomed to it is going to take some time.

Well, it seems like I can turn it off, so when it gets to the point where I can't stand it, I think I'll do just that. Enhanced Smell, though, seems like it might be the skill I'm most likely to want to turn off in the future. I really would rather not have to smell something foul with an amplified sense of smell.

Now that I think about it, I don't think there's any reason why I'd even want Enhanced Taste. Everything in this dungeon is, well, disgusting. I have yet to meet a tasty monster. On top of that, there's things like those snail bugs, where even eating them normally is out of the question.

Oh, hm, I guess it's been a while since I've seen a snail bug. They were literally everywhere before those monkeys attacked, but now I can't see a single one around me. Where did they all go?

...Uggghh, on top of that, it's getting really hot. I wanna turn on the AC. Why is it that I, a girl who spent as much time as possible shut in an air-conditioned room in the summertime, am subjected to this kind of heat? I'm too frail for the heat and the cold...

...Hot...? Wait a minute, hot? In both the upper and lower layers, the dungeon has been a pleasant temperature, neither too hot nor too cold, so... hot?

I slowly take a look around my surroundings. There's not a single monster around me. I don't feel like I'm in any special danger... yet, I can feel a change in the environment.

I look ahead, along the wall. It's hard to notice, but, little by little, it seems like the floor is starting to slope upwards.

Up. Up! It's going up!! Aha, I did it! I finally, finally found it! Since it's going up... yeah, that's what's happening, right? Of course!

I'm climbing out of the lower levels and into the middle!

Yahoo!! I did it! This was the right path! Now I can finally escape these nightmarish lower depths! I don't have to constantly worry about the Earth Dragon anymore! Enormous swarms of monkeys aren't going to jump me out of nowhere! I don't have to constantly sneak through crowds of truly monstrous monsters, fearing for my life!

Before I knew it, I had started sprinting forward. As expected of a speed spec: I charged up the slope so quickly that even I was surprised by it. My yellow stamina bar couldn't hold out.

Pant, pant.

Ahhh. I may be fast, but I can't rocket forward at top speed, huh? That was a pretty big blind spot. I know that I can keep running if I really need to by drawing on my red stamina like I did when I ran away from those centipedes, but I should take note of this as one of my weak points.

Regardless, I'll be at the top of this hill soon. Waiting for me at the top is the middle layer, which I've only ever seen in my dreams.


It's been a long road to get here. I fled from a snake, tripped up, fell down here to the lower layer, and have been running away from danger ever since. Those wasps almost killed me, the Earth Dragon almost killed me, I barely made it out of the den of all those dangerous monsters, the taste of those snail bugs almost killed me, and those monkeys almost killed me. I've done nothing down here but nearly get killed. Good job on staying alive, me. Haven't these events been a little too drastic? I think something good, without any downsides, might have finally happened!









Farewell, lower depths! Hello, middle layers!

At the top of the hill, an endless plain of red-hot magma and scorching earth

stretches into the distance.

[prev](#) • [next](#)

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069The Middle Strata of the Great Elro Labyrinth

I'm A Spider, So What? – 069

The Middle Strata of the Great Elro Labyrinth

Uh, uhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh...

Whaaat the heeeck?

I... don't get it.

WHAT THE HELL?!

This is pointless! This is unbelievable!! This is idiotic!!!

Magma?! Why the heck is there magma flowing in a dungeon?! Oh, it's a dungeon, so that makes sense... no! No! How?!

Hot! It's not just air conditioner weather anymore, it's scorching hot!!¹ Whoa, did my health just drop a point?! Is it literally hot enough for me to lose HP? Whoooooa, zones with area damage are no joke... And while I was saying that my health dropped another point.

There does seem to be a path I can follow to avoid the magma, but continuing on from here seems pretty impossible, right? I'm not even close to the magma where I am right now, yet I'm still taking damage. My health is going to evaporate if I have to walk anywhere close by. And if I'm that close, there's a chance I might accidentally touch it...

No waaaaay. I finally make it out of the lower depths and this is what I get? I can't think of a single way that I could get through this area.

Hm? I see a monster off in the distance. Enhanced Vision may be simple, but it gets the job done. Well, it looks like that monster is swimming placidly through

the magma. Just seeing that is a little terrifying, but still, Appraisal result, please?

Elro Generash² — LV 7

Statistics:

HP: 167/167 (green)

MP: 145/158 (blue)

SP: 155/155 (yellow), 156/165 (red)

Avg. Offense: 85

Avg. Defense: 83

Avg. Magic Power: 81

Avg. Resistance: 79

Avg. Speed: 89

Failed to appraise statistics.

Eh? Madam Appraisal? Is this just in my imagination, or have you added something new to your display?

Oh... ohh!! You're amazing, Madam Appraisal! Until now all I've been able to see is a target's health and such, but now you're showing me things like their attack power! Your success rate probably still isn't 100%, but I can use this information to accurately pinpoint my opponents' strengths! Cooool. This is amazingly cool. Knowing my opponent's strengths is going to be a huge advantage.

On top of that, if things are going in order, isn't the next thing going to be showing me their skills? If I know their skills, my enemies' information is practically stripped bare before me! That owns! I'm gonna own! Aaargh, it's going to be a while before I get the next level thooooough...

So, it's great that I noticed how amazing Appraisal is now, because that monster isn't strong at aaaaall. It looks kinda like a seahorse that grew arms and legs, but it's swimming freely through the magma... Unbelievable.

Rather, I say that it's not very strong, but it's stats are basically on par with mine. My physical stats are pretty low across the board, except for my speed, and magic is basically a dump stat since I can't actually use any magic. As for my speed, I know well that I don't have enough instantaneous stamina to run at top

speed for long periods of time. Running causes my yellow gauge to rapidly vanish, and when it hits zero I get painfully winded. I really don't have any edge when it comes to a head-to-head fight.

Well then, let's check out the double-appraisal result...

Elro Generash: *A low ranking species of drake, native to the middle strata of the Great Elro Labyrinth. It can manipulate flame, and uses it to defend itself.*

Found it! The middle strata of the Great Elro Labyrinth!

The Middle Strata of the Great Elro Labyrinth: *The area of the Great Elro Labyrinth that sits between the lower and upper strata. The entire area is covered in flowing, red-hot magma, and it is inhabited by many monsters resistant to fire.*

...Seriously? Whoooooa. No waaaaaay. The entire middle strata is like this? I'm going to have to go through this to get back to the upper levels? That's impossible, right?

I get damaged by the terrain just by being here. Rivers and ponds of magma cover the earth, and I'm dead in an instant if I fall into one of those. And, it's not at all unreasonable to think that the fire-resistant monsters living down here are going to be able to use fire themselves. You remember the one big weakness of my spider silk, right? *Fire!!*

Let's step back a bit. If you take away my silk, what do I have left? My venom and my speed. Well, at least I still have something, but it's really going to suck not being able to use the strongest weapon in my arsenal. Really, I'm not even going to be able to finally try out my poison thread! I've been looking forward to using it so much! Why are you doing this to me?

Ah! My health is getting seriously low. Let's go back take some cover.

Fwoooof. Back to the lower depths, at the bottom of the slope. It's still pretty hot here, but at least my health isn't going down anymore. If I rest for a bit here, Automatic HP Recovery will be able to fix me back up.

Although... I do have Automatic HP Recovery, don't I, but the damage still kept

accumulating... It's going to be impossible no matter how hard I push forward, isn't it? If I want to beat this, I need to stock up on potions and Cool Drinks, right? I don't have any of those, though.

If I were to get Fire Resistance, would this get easier? But... if my silk is weak to fire, then my body's probably weak to fire too. I noticed it back when I was looking at the skill list, but, Fire Resistance wasn't on the list. That means that I can't actually buy it with just two hundred points, right? There were plenty of other resistances on the list, but no Fire Resistance. This is just a theory, but maybe, if I'm weak to fire, then it might be hard for me to acquire Fire Resistance.

“Proficiency requirements met. Your skill, [Prediction (LV 4)] has been raised to level 5.”

Ah, right. You really do level up quickly, don't you? This is probably Pride's effect, huh.

Well, let's put that aside for a bit. What the heck do I do now? I want to get back to the upper layers, so I have to beat this. However, I can't think of any way that I actually can.

Then, is there another way I can get up there? I know at least one other way: going back and climbing up the shaft where the wasps are. Going back to where the Earth Dragon is lurking, though?

Nope.

No can do.

No way.

So, maybe I should search for other shafts? Are there even any other convenient shafts like that?


I can't say that there aren't. Back in the upper layers, a wandering wasp did get caught in one of my webs, so it's possible that it flew up out of a different shaft, where the wasps have made another nest just like the first one. This is, however, still only a possibility.











Do I try to charge my way through the middle strata, or do I search the lower depths for a shaft that might not even be there? Hmm, what should I choose...

Translator's notes for this chapter:

1. The original line is “it’s no longer just hot (, "atsui", which is used to describe hot weather), it’s hot (, also “atsui”, which is used to describe hot things, like fire)“.
 2. Pronounced with a hard G.
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070The Training Part

I'm A Spider, So What? – 070

The Training Part

For the time being, I'll build a nest between the lower and middle strata. I'm not in any hurry, after all. I don't think even the Earth Dragon is going to follow me this far, and I don't think anyone will bother me if I build my nest near the ceiling, like I did before those monkeys attacked.

After reflecting back on that attack, I've decided that I'm going to make a really solid nest, instead of a simple one. My goal is to build something that'll be all right even if another giant monkey were to throw a boulder at it. Thankfully, I have a huge stockpile of red stamina after eating all of those monkeys.

Then, using this nest as my base of operations, I'm going to, little by little, make preparations for conquering the middle layer. Specifically, I'm hoping to acquire Fire Resistance as well as grind up the level of Automatic HP Recovery. In order to do that, I think that I should go up into the middle stratum, let my health be depleted, and then return home, and then repeat that several times per day.

Taking damage in there is likely going to help me gain proficiency in either resisting fire or resisting heat. I don't know how long it would take, but I should eventually earn either Fire or Heat Resistance. Plus, after I take all of that damage, Automatic HP Recovery will activate, giving me even more proficiency and killing two birds with one stone. If my defense and my recovery are enough to exceed the incoming damage, then I should be able to walk around just fine.

When I'm not doing that, I'll train up my other skills. I'd like to train up both Multitasking and Computation if I can, but I actually have no clue how to work on Multitasking so I think I'll leave it alone for now. Computation is easy enough to raise, I just need to keep doing mental arithmetic.

I don't particularly want to waste any of my mana recovery, so I think I should

work on leveling both Thread Manipulation and Poison Synthesis. I've actually been coming up with new ways to use Poison Synthesis, so I really want to concentrate on getting its level up. Thread Manipulation isn't going to be particularly useful in the middle strata, though... Even though it's one of my core skills...

After that, I should put some effort into these stat-boosting skills. Kartikeya, Greater Strength, and Greater Toughness all increase my stats on level-up, so I want to give those extra priority. Although, while I know I can run to train Kartikeya and do push-ups (er, leg-ups) to train Greater Strength, how do I train Greater Toughness? It's a defensive skill, so do I really have to get hit by an attack? Hmmmm. Maybe, when I'm training Thread Manipulation, I should try whipping myself. I really hate pain, but I should at least try this once.

Next thing, if I'm going to stay here for a while, I'll need to secure a source of food. Right now, my red stamina isn't decreasing at all thanks to Overeating, but I will eventually need to eat something. So, I should probably do some patrols of the area and make sure I have everything I need to go hunting. Or, maybe I should put up some webs to catch things? A spiderweb trap with threads as invisibly thin as I can make them. Yeah, that's a good idea! I'll do that. Even if I accidentally wind up snaring a monster that's powerful enough to rip through my silk, it's not like I'm going to be in the area, so I won't really be in any danger.

Now that that's decided: commence the operation! The first step is to build a home. I crawl my way up the wall. After that life-or-death struggle with those monkeys, I've built up quite a resistance to heights, huh... I used to be scared to the point that I got levels in Fear Resistance, but now I don't feel a thing.

“Proficiency requirements met. You have gained the skill [3-D Maneuvering (LV 1)].”

Hm? Oh, I got a new skill, huh. Show me, show me.

***3-D Maneuvering:** Allows for the execution of movements in three-dimensional space, such as running along walls or landing on ceilings.*

Ha hah... Worthless. I can already do that! Well, maybe when I level it up it'll get more useful, so it might be too early to call this worthless, but it's not an important skill at all. I'm just gonna leave it alone...

Right. Got a questionable skill, now it's time to build this home.

Whew. Alright, done. The completed home rests between the wall and the ceiling, stretched waaay out horizontally. I originally wanted it to be a lot more balanced, but the quality of the ceiling rocks changes partway out, becoming too slippery to adhere any silk to. I couldn't stretch it very far forward along the ceiling, so it ended up in a shape like this.


Since it's so spread out, I'm not very satisfied with how thick its surface is. I was aiming for something that could protect against a giant monkey's rock throw, but I don't think this'll quite be able to stand up to that. However, my foundation is very strong, and I've protected everything against falling. Even if a hundred monkeys cling to this, it won't fall! Unless a foe has a ranged attack to rival the giant monkeys', breaking into this home is going to be very difficult. Even still, this isn't strong enough to protect me from any abnormally powerful monsters like the Earth Dragon, so I can't quite relax entirely. I'll be living here freely for the time being, so I'll be using this nest as My Home #4.










Now then, I've secured my position and filled my health back up. Let's go back up to the middle layer and start working on getting my health down again! ... This is going to suck...

As mentioned earlier, I have arrived in the middle strata! It is very hot! The temperature right now is, frankly, unmeasurable, as I do not have a thermometer! The forecast for today indicates a devastating wave of lava! The conditions out here are such that this weather reporter must not remain out here for very long! This has been a live report from the middle strata! *Retreat!*

Whooooof. That was hoooooot. Neither of my skills leveled, either. Well, I'll get to this at my leisure.

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Y1The Hero and the King

I'm A Spider, So What? – Y1

The Hero and the King

“I brought you this, Father,” I say. “It’s a local wine from the Budie province.”
“Ohh. I’ve never had this one before. I wonder how it tastes? I’m looking forward to it.”

In this spotlessly clean room that nevertheless has official documents and papers jumbled up everywhere, I have just presented my father with a bottle of wine I brought back for him as a souvenir. My father loves liquor. Usually, when he works alone, he performs his duties while sneaking drinks. By now, it’s become something of an open secret.

As such, whenever I return from a foreign land, I make sure to bring him a rare or unusual bottle of alcohol. As the King, my father can’t go off visiting other countries on a whim, so even a simple gift such as this makes him very happy. It’s also become a bit of a tradition for the two of us to enjoy it together.

“Father, is it alright for you to take some time off now?”

“No problem at all. If something comes up, I can shave off a little bit of my sleeping time. My son, who I so rarely get to see, has finally come home, and that’s far more important.”

I smile wryly. He said that so flippantly, but the work of a king is no easy thing.

“Besides, Cyris has gotten quite used to his duties. If something ever happens to me, the country is in safe hands.”

“Father, my brother may be very skilled, but this country still needs its King. Please do not say such ominous things.”

My father sighs, apologizing offhandedly. He walks over to a bookshelf, retrieves two of the glasses he keeps hidden there, and pours some wine for both

of us.

“Hmm, what an unusual aroma!”

“Yes. I selected it because I particularly liked its fragrance. I think you’ll be quite pleased by it.”

A mellow aroma fills the room. We clink our glasses, then tip them down our throats.

“Hmm!” he says. “This goes down quite smoothly. I feel like I could drink this forever.”

“It’s quite popular with the women of the region, you know. They say that the taste is greatly enhanced if you drink it while eating fruit. Please, have some of these.”

I offer him the fruits that I had prepared. He puts one in his mouth, then takes another sip of wine.

“Delicious. I usually drink such strong liquor, but drinks like this are great from time to time.”

“I thought you’d like it.”

Inwardly, I breathed a small sigh of relief. I had been worried that my father, who likes much drier liquors, wouldn’t like this wine. I can now put those needless worries behind me.

We continued to drink in silence for a while. Suddenly, I remembered something from earlier this afternoon, and my jaw drops.

“What is it?” asks my father.

“Well, I went to see how Sue and Shun were doing this afternoon. I was just remembering what happened then.”

My little brother and sister have so much talent that it even shocked me, the Hero. I sparred with Shun as part of his training, and it was remarkably difficult to keep my composure. I shouldn’t have tried to show off by fighting with one hand. Next time I spar with him, I’ll make sure to use both of my hands.

“Hmm! How are those two doing, in your opinion?”

“They have a terrifying amount of talent, Shun especially so. If he had been born

just a little earlier, then the title of Hero might have fallen on his shoulders instead of mine.”

This is the complete truth. Really, in terms of raw talent, Shun and Sue are both far, far ahead of me. The reason why my stats are still so much higher than theirs is because of the effects of my Hero title. They still wouldn’t be able to beat me at the moment if I didn’t have the title, but they’d be able to surpass me very soon. They possess such incredible talent. They might even manage to overtake me, even with my Hero title. I hope that doesn’t happen. If it does, my pride as an older brother would be shattered into pieces. Shun, especially, seems to respect me a great deal, and seeing him disillusioned would be too much of a shock to bear.

This is a grave situation. I should redouble my training efforts, so that they don’t catch up to me. Right.

“What are you nodding to yourself about?” asks my father.

“Well, it seems that it is not so simple to maintain one’s pride as an older brother.”

Come to think of it, Shun seems to be maintaining the same sort of dignity around Sue, and it seems to be working very well. She really clings to him, and acts like she views me as a rival for his affections. One day, she’ll grow apart from him, but for now it’s extremely cute that she gets so mad when her beloved older brother is peeled away from her.

“I’ve done those two a terrible disservice,” says my father, bitterness floating across his face.

The two of them were born just after the previous Hero had met his end. At that time, I was the one to receive the title of Hero. The previous Hero died unexpectedly, his location unknown and his actions mysterious, and the title fell on me. Suddenly, the monsters began to move in great numbers. My father, as a result, had no time to spare for his two youngest children. Even though he believes family to be precious, his duties as a king come first. He had no choice but to prioritize the needs of his country, and this weighs heavily on his mind.

“You did what you had to do,” I said. “So many things were happening at once, you didn’t have a choice.”

“But those two have never hugged me once. That seems like a clear answer to

me.”

“It will be alright. They will understand, in time.”

“If only...”

With a sad look on his face, he swirls the wine in his glass, then, with a heavy, heavy sigh, spills out his pent-up feelings.

“To be honest, there are times I find being king very depressing. It’s not just those two kids. Julius, I worry about you as well. I never wanted my son to have to shoulder the burden of being Hero. Yet, as king, it is my duty to tell you to go. It may be the right choice for me as a king, but it makes me a failure of a father.”

“Father. I am proud of being the Hero. Please, do not say things. If you take being the Hero away from me, what do I have left?”

“That’s not true.”

“But it is. I don’t have my older brother’s skill or education in politics, nor do I have Leston’s penetrating faith, nor can I marry into another family like my sister can. The only thing I can do is to be the Hero of the people, to swing my sword in defense of humanity. Please, Father, do not worry about me. I am, for my own sake, doing what I am meant to do, and doing my very best at it.”


“Leston’s really just doing whatever he pleases, though.”





“He really is.”





The two of us let out a chuckle.

Father, from where I stand, you’re an amazing father. So, in order to be as helpful to you as I can, I’ll continue to be the Hero.

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071Leveling

I'm a Spider, So What? – 071

Leveling

Leveling my skills so far took a lot of work. ...Wait, no, these went up on their own. The last time I really settled in to focus on leveling a skill was back when I made my first home, and then I really didn't work on anything but Spider Silk...

I have way more skills than I did back then, and, best of all, Appraisal's level has jumped way up. In other words, I'm in a great position to do some very efficient leveling.

On top of that, now that I can see the skill list, I've tried finding skills I thought I could acquire and doing things that I thought would earn skill proficiency. Thanks to that, I've acquired quite a few new skills. Maaaaan, Madam Appraisal, you really are the greatest. You're really a cheat skill when it comes to skill acquisition.

Also, in order to secure provisions, I set a few traps around the area. They're super simple, just a few super-sticky threads spread around on the floor, but when a monster steps on one, it gets stuck. I left those alone for a while, then checked back on them occasionally. The result: I successfully caught something! It was pretty weak, so I put an end to it quickly.

And, in doing so, I finally was able to show my Poison Silk to the world! It's silk imbued with poison, and it's surpassed Severing Thread as my strongest attack. Man, this is amazing. It's seriously amazing. It's seriously amazing, but I don't know if I can use it in the middle strataaaa... how unfair.

Also, I leveled up.

"Huh?" you ask? Don't. I had that reaction already.

After all, isn't it *weird* that I would have leveled up after defeating just one small fry of a monster? I was pretty surprised. This looks like another bonus from Pride, and a pretty effective one at that, if I leveled from a single weak monster.

After that, I caught a few more monsters, just as I wanted. Thanks to that, I haven't run out of food at all, nor has my stamina been going down. There's evidence that a few monsters managed to break free of my traps, but, honestly, that's fine with me. I really don't want to meet the monsters that are strong enough to tear themselves out of my stickiest threads. Thanks to that, the only monsters left in my traps are the safe ones, so I can dispatch them with a smile on my face. All the levels I got are way exhilarating, too.

After doing all that stuff, my stats are looking a little like this:

Small Poison Taratekt — LV 5 — (no name)

Statistics:

HP: 83/83 (green)

MP: 181/181 (blue)

SP: 82/82 (yellow), 82/82 (red)

Avg. Offense: 92

Avg. Defense: 92

Avg. Magic Power: 135

Avg. Resistance: 168

Avg. Speed: 830

Skills:

[Automatic HP Recovery (LV 5)] • [Accelerated MP Recovery (LV 3)]

• [MP Consumption Reduction (LV 2)] •

[Accelerated SP Recovery (LV 2)] •

[SP Consumption Reduction (LV 2)] • [Damage Enhancement (LV 1)]

• [Slashing Enhancement (LV 1)] • [Poison Enhancement (LV 2)] •

[Battle Spirit (LV 1)] • [Willpower Allocation (LV 2)] •

[Greater Poison Attack (LV 3)] • [Poison Synthesis (LV 7)] •

[Thread Talent (LV 3)] • [Spider Silk (LV 9)] •

[Severing Thread (LV 6)] • [Thread Manipulation (LV 8)] •

[Throwing (LV 6)] • [3-D Maneuvering (LV 3)] •

[Concentration (LV 9)] • [Prediction (LV 8)] • [Multitasking (LV 4)] •

[Computation (LV 6)] • [Aiming (LV 7)] • [Evasion (LV 3)] •
[Appraisal (LV 8)] • [Detection (LV 6)] • [Stealth (LV 7)] • [Hell] •
[Corruption Magic (LV 3)] • [Shadow Magic (LV 2)] •
[Poison Magic (LV 2)] • [Abyssal Magic (LV 10)] • [Pride] •
[Overeating (LV 7)] • [Night Vision (LV 10)] •
[Visible Spectrum Expansion (LV 2)] • [Damage Resistance (LV 1)] •
[Bashing Resistance (LV 2)] • [Slashing Resistance (LV 3)] •
[Fire Resistance (LV 1)] • [Greater Poison Resistance (LV 2)] •
[Paralysis Resistance (LV 3)] • [Petrification Resistance (LV 3)] •
[Acid Resistance (LV 4)] • [Decay Resistance (LV 3)] •
[Fainting Resistance (LV 2)] • [Fear Resistance (LV 6)] •
[Corruption Resistance (LV 3)] • [Ignore Pain] •
[Pain Tolerance (LV 7)] • [Enhanced Vision (LV 8)] •
[Enhanced Hearing (LV 8)] • [Enhanced Smell (LV 7)] •
[Enhanced Taste (LV 4)] • [Enhanced Touch (LV 6)] • [Vitality (LV 7)]
• [Mana Pool (LV 8)] • [Alacrity (LV 7)] • [Endurance (LV 7)] •
[Greater Strength (LV 3)] • [Greater Toughness (LV 3)] •
[Resistance (LV 3)] • [Kartikeya (LV 3)] • [Taboo (LV 4)] • []

Skill points available: 180

Maaan, I got *strong*. Seriously. With stats like these, wouldn't I be able to fight upper-layer monsters head-on?

I've seen this before in my stats, but it really looks like there's a variety of ways to bring up your stats without having to level up. I went running for a while to work on boosting my skills, and thanks to that training my stats have gone up as well. It looks like it's the same as in my previous life: if you train hard, you'll get stronger. I've got a stats screen in this world, though, so it's way easier to see the effects.

And, plus, the stat increases on level up are now double what they were before! You might be asking me what the hell I'm talking about, but I seriously don't know what's happened! No, well, it's probably Pride again. When I leveled, my speed increased by a whopping 42 in an instant. That really startled me. It looks like the "increase in the rate of stat growth" that Pride gives me literally doubles the increases that I get from my other skills. Pride, you're seriously an amazing skill...


My skills have also gone way up in level. Look at the poison-related ones! Did you notice? Poison Attack became Greater Poison Attack¹ and Poison Resistance became Greater Poison Resistance! That happened when those skills hit level ten. I was amazed to find out that skills have evolutions too. The effect seems to be a straight upgrade of the previous skills' effects. It looks like these are going to be my main weapons in the middle strata, so these evolutions are a huge deal.











Eh? Why'd Poison Resistance go up, you ask? I've been regularly whipping myself with Poison Silk, you know. Really, if I didn't do that, then the level wouldn't up, right? I can endure a little bit of pain if it's for the sake of my skill levels. Anyone would do the same. I did it, after all. Huh? I'm the only one? Nah, no waaaay. ...Probably.

Translator's notes for this chapter:

1. Originally, "Deadly Poison Attack", but I'm continuing to translate upgraded versions of skills as "Greater" to keep with Western RPG conventions and to prevent skill names from being obfuscated unnecessarily.

[prev](#) • [next](#)

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- 
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072The Fruits of Leveling

I'm A Spider, So What? – 072

The Fruits of Leveling

Also on the topic of poison, Poison Synthesis leveled up as well. It's gotten up to level seven by now, and I've got even more of both the kinds of poison I can synthesize and the attributes I can adjust.

Poison Synthesis Menu

Weak Poison
Poison
Strong Poison
Deadly Spider Venom (LV 3)

Damage adjustment Duration adjustment
Contact damage adjustment
Synthesis volume adjustment

Thanks to leveling up Poison Attack, my Spider Venom has now become Deadly. I did also pick up both Poison and Strong Poison, but these are simply poisons that are stronger than Weak Poison. Deadly Spider Venom is obviously even better than those, though. Sorry, guys, but Deadly Spider Venom's the only one of you that'll see the light of day in combat.

However, there's new customization options! "Contact damage adjustment", as its name implies, adjusts how much damage a poison can do just from touching you. It's how I control external damage, while the "damage adjustment" option lets me control internal damage when a poison's ingested or injected. There's no real need for me to adjust my Deadly Spider Venom, however, since its damage is already way higher than I can modify with Poison Synthesis.

"Synthesis volume adjustment" lets me control the amount of poison that I can

synthesize at once, albeit at the cost of additional mana. I tried it while I was leveling, and it's super convenient. As long as I don't mess up while using it, I can instantly create a tremendous amount of poison to inflict on my enemies. *Drown in my sea of venom!* I'll shout, as I rain down a torrent of toxin on my helpless foes...

My non-poison-related skills also leveled up quite a bit. I was able to pick up a variety of skills relating to my mana and stamina. For my mana, I got Accelerated MP Recovery and MP Consumption Reduction. Just as advertised, my natural mana regeneration has gone up and my expenditures have gone down. Same thing goes for stamina too, with faster recovery and lowered costs. The faster recovery, though, only applies to my yellow gauge. The cost reduction looks like it applies to both yellow and red: when I sprinted around at full power to try it out, both gauges seemed to be going down less quickly. (The red gauge actually didn't go down at all, thanks to Overeating, but the good lady Appraisal helped me confirm the result.)

Damage Enhancement is, uh, pretty OP. It multiplies the damage of anything you do to destroy something. "Something" includes, of course, other living beings. In other words, all of my attacks are being significantly strengthened. Damage Resistance is the defensive skill on the other side of the coin. Both of these skills are scary good, so I worked hard to make sure I picked both of those up.

Slashing Enhancement and Poison Enhancement are skills that boost attacks that use their corresponding attributes. It's a pretty simple way to boost both my Severing Thread and my poison.

Battle Spirit is a pretty weird skill. It burns stamina from my red gauge to boost all of my physical stats. It's what you'd call a toggled buff, but it drains a *ton* of stamina while it's on. My red stamina is my lifeline, so there's nooo way I'm eager to use it up like that. This skill isn't very efficient, either, so I'm going to save it for when I'm backed into a corner. Way into a corner.

Grant Vitality is similar to Battle Spirit, but it targets an external object, not myself. In my case, I'd use it on my silk. Again, though, I'm not going to wind up using it, for largely the same reasons as Battle Spirit.

My biggest score in the silk department was a skill called Thread Talent. It's a super convenient skill that applies a flat bonus to everything I do involving

threads, like making my silk stronger or easier to work with. Since it's just a straight boost with no downsides, I put it to work immediately.

Throw and Aiming both went up, too.

I didn't do anything in particular to work on leveling 3-D Maneuvering, but climbing up the walls to get to and from my home has caused it to gradually level up.

Multitasking and Computation haven't really gone up at all, but it really can't be helped. I'm still waiting on deliberately grinding it up.

On the other hand, Concentration and Prediction have both gone up quite a bit. I don't really care much about Prediction, but Concentration's hit level nine! Level ten can't be far off. Based on the other skills so far, Concentration will either evolve into a new form or derive a new skill once it hits level ten. I wonder which it will be? This has been a super useful skill so far, so I'm really expecting its evolution—or derivation—to be good as well.

No change to my magic skills.

As for my resistances, my constant literal self-flagellation has gotten me Damage Resistance, Bashing Resistance, and Slashing Resistance. On top of that, I also managed to finally pick up my long-desired Fire Resistance. After all of this effort, I finally made it to level one. Automatic HP Regeneration has also leveled up a bunch, so my future's looking pretty bright.

Next, I boosted most of my sensory-enhancing skills. I've left Enhance Taste aside for the time being. It, uh, really doesn't seem very useful in a dungeon like this.

I also ground up my stat-boosting skills. After constantly raining poison attacks on myself, I got a new skill called Resistance, which, well, strengthened my Resistance stat. It went up even further when Poison Resistance evolved into Greater Poison Resistance! I don't really know exactly what the link is, but it may be that my Resistance stat goes up when a resistance skill gets added.

It's been a real pain to try to level Greater Strength, Greater Toughness, and Kartikeya. They really haven't gone anywhere. Seriously, I ran and ran and ran to try to grind up Kartikeya, and I only managed to get a single level. Compared

to the rest of my stat-boosting skills, these are waaay more difficult to level. Well, I guess it's only natural, since these skills are way more powerful than the others.


Now that I know how skill evolution works, I really want to get the rest of my stat-boosting skills up to level ten as quickly as I can. They might have evolved forms too.









Alas, I was unable to further raise M'lady Appraisal to any new heights. I think that I haven't been able to get very much skill proficiency over the last few days since my actions have been so constrained. If that's the case, I really should start moving towards clearing the middle strata.

By now, I'm more-or-less able to stand the environmental damage of the middle strata. I tried it out to be sure, getting as close as I could to a magma pool, and it seems to work. It takes everything I've got to just barely mitigate it, though. If I take any other damage while I'm in the middle layer, leveling up is the only way I'd be able to heal it. I really want to spend some more time on my skills just to be extra-safe, but I *really* want to earn some more proficiency for the Lady Appraisal's sake...

Hmmmmmm. I'm torn.

[prev](#) • [next](#)

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073 Suddenly, a death flag!

I'm A Spider, So What? – 073

Suddenly, a death flag!

Alright! Let's get to the middle strata. Carpe diem! Seize the day! With my Speed stat as high as it is, I should be able to run past any enemies I might encounter. Plus, I've been able to keep moving despite life-threatening wounds before now. I'll never get anywhere if I'm afraid of stubbing my toes.

Regeneration has spoiled me. This is clear.

Under ordinary circumstances, I'd want to spend some more time leveling, but... I dunno, I have a feeling that I really should get out of here quickly. I'm getting really fidgety and restless.

And so, today I depart, leaving behind my fourth home! Farewell, home number four! You have treated me well. Take care of yourself!

In that instant, my fourth home is abruptly blasted apart.

I'm blown away by the shockwave. I hit the ground rolling, and manage to come to a stop about halfway up the slope. I glance at my health bar, but it's only gone down a little bit. I'm lucky; I made it out relatively unscathed since I was already outside, but... what would have happened if I was still in there?

My eyes alight on the creature that started this fiasco.

The Earth Dragon, Kagna — LV 26
Statistics:

HP: 4198/4198 (green)
MP: 3339/3654 (blue)
SP: 2798/2798 (yellow), 2995/3112 (red)

Failed to appraise statistics.

It's a dragon. Compared to the other Earth Dragon, Alaba, that I saw before, this one looks kinda shorter and stouter. It looks very strong. Also, it has no wings.

Nnnnope. I get right the heck out of there, charging up the ramp at maximum speed. I reach the top in record time and just keep running. I burn through my entire bar of yellow stamina, but I just keep running. I push my legs so far past their limit that they start screaming in agony. This is excruciating, but still, I just keep running. I weave around the streams of magma, running as fast as I can along the few bits of solid ground.

“Proficiency requirements met. Your skill, [SP Consumption Reduction (LV 2)] has been raised to level 3.”

“Proficiency requirements met. Your skill, [Fear Resistance (LV 6)] has been raised to level 7.”

“Proficiency requirements met. Your skill, [Alacrity (LV 7)] has been raised to level 8.”

“Proficiency requirements met. Your skill, [Endurance (LV 7)] has been raised to level 8.”

I don't know how far I've managed to run, but my legs have finally just given out. I want to do nothing more than collapse on the floor and just lay here forever, but I scrape together all of my remaining willpower and force myself to turn around. Behind me, there's no sign that the Earth Dragon has followed me at all.

That was cloooooose... I look around to make sure that there's no monsters immediately nearby, then flop down to the ground.

Aaaaaaahh... No waaaaaaay... An Earth Dragon attack, in broad daylight, with no warning or provocation whatsoever? No freaking waaaaaaay. I could have died. If I'd been even an instant later in leaving my home, I *would* have died! Things only turned out like this because I had that uncomfortable premonition.

Seriously, though, what the heck was that? Are Earth Dragons compelled to fire their breath weapons at every single cobweb they see? That's freaking scary. I didn't pay much attention, but... do the Earth Dragons make their lair in the lower strata? That's freaking scary. ...Wait, no, let's not think about a place with

a bunch of Earth Dragons lying around.

I think back on the stats I saw from Appraisal, and how every single one of them was *four digits*. That's pretty freaking ridiculous! There's no way I could have won. On top of that, it had mana and stamina to spare after using an attack that straight-up obliterated my home. That thing wasn't single-shot! It could fire it as much as it wanted!

Impossible. What a monster! Earth Dragons are terrifying.

On top of that, that new Earth Dragon seemed to be a totally different variety than the Earth Dragon Alaba that I saw before. The new one had a lower level than Alaba did, but I wasn't able to Appraise Alaba back then so I have no way to compare the two to see which is stronger. That doesn't change the fact that it isn't even remotely possible for me to beat either of them.

Alaba and Kagna are both described as Earth Dragons, so they must be related somehow, right? Maybe they started out as the same species, but then they took different branches when evolving. Ahhh, that might be it... Dragons are the *creme de la creme* of powerful monsters, it's only natural that they'd have many evolutionary forms.

Or, if that's not it, maybe each Earth Dragon is its own unique species? Huh, that might be it too... Since they're high up on the evolutionary ladder, there aren't going to be very many of them, but they'd have to be pretty strong, huh? ... Yeah, those guys are *definitely* strong, with stats like those. So, if there's so few of them, the odds of running into them must be very low...

Wait. If that's the case, getting attacked by not just one, but two Earth Dragons has to be extremely unlikely. Is my luck really that astronomically terrible?

N... n-n-n-no waay that can be true, r-r-right? I've always managed to come out on top, even though I've been in so many situations that were so hopeless I thought I was going to die, so my luck must be good, right? Huh? You're telling me someone with actual good luck wouldn't be in mortal peril so often? Hmmm?

...Let's not do this. Let's just put the brakes on this particular train of thought.

Man, I was a hair's breadth away from disaster, there. I'm so glad I didn't decide

to stick around and level any more. I haven't been able to shake off my bad luck yet. Let's just leave it at that for now. Someone, please agree with me?


“Proficiency requirements met. Your skill, [Prediction (LV 8)] has been raised to level 9.”











Who the hell asked you?! What's with that timing! Were you just waiting to make that quip?! Hey, so-called “Voice of Heaven”, you think you're some kinda comedian now?!

Hoooof. I got way too riled up about such a stupid thing.

Right. I've had probably the worst start to this possible, but let's start working through conquering the middle strata. I want to get as far away from the Earth Dragon as I can.

[prev](#) • [next](#)

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074 Middle strata conquest: commence!

I'm A Spider, So What? – 074

Middle strata conquest: commence!

Right, then, first thing's first, let's verify my current condition. I'm currently surrounded on all sides by bubbling, seething magma. The ratio of magma to solid ground is, hmm, probably about fifty/fifty. I kinda blitzed my way through to this particular spot, but am I even going in the right direction? Well, right or wrong, I have no clue. All that I can do right now is keep going forward.

So, I'm still feeling the aftereffects of that Earth Dragon attack. After sprinting for so long even after I was well past my limit, my health has gone down a bit. Ordinarily, a tiny bit of damage like this wouldn't be a big deal, but in a scorching-hot place like this I'm constantly taking environmental damage. My automatic recovery is only barely keeping up with this constant damage, so any additional damage I receive isn't going to be able to heal at all. In order to recover, I'm either going to have to wait for the full heal on a levelup, or hope that either Fire Resistance or Automatic HP Recovery levels up and tips the balance of damage and healing more in my favor.

Although, it is entirely possible that getting super close to the magma would be even more unbearably hot, and the amount of damage I'd take would be even higher. I'd really like to avoid super-hot places whenever possible, but I dunno what's coming down the bend...

Based on what the upper and lower strata were like, I'd bet that the middle strata is going to be pretty huge. This is, after all, the world's greatest dungeon. This place is big enough that it connects two continents together! I need to steel myself for the possibility that I'll be stuck here for days. Man, this journey's going to be long, and I'm already just crushed. This isn't a good sign.

Right, so, let's get going.

Hrm. It really is hot, though... Before I was reborn as a spider, I lived a super comfortable, climate-controlled life without ever being too hot or too cold. This kinda extreme temperature shift is really making me sluggish... It's not like I can't handle the heat at all; I did keep coming back up here while I was trying to level up Fire Resistance, after all. But still, when I think about how I'm going to be stuck in this heat for soooo long before I finally get out of the middle strata, I really do get kinda worn down.

My feet in particular. There's magma flowing all around nearby, you know? The ground is, of course, going to be scorching hot. And not scorching hot like the asphalt in the middle of the summer. If you tried to fry an egg on *this* sidewalk, it would just burn. And I have to walk on it! Barefoot! This is way more painful than just plain "hot".

Oh, great, a monster.

Elro Generash — LV 5

Statistics:

HP: 159/159 (green)

MP: 145/148 (blue)

SP: 145/145 (yellow), 116/145 (red)

Failed to appraise statistics.

Ah, it's one of the ones I saw when I first came up here. The seahorse-looking ones. Just like back then, it's calmly swimming around in *molten rock*. No waaaay.

It looks like it hasn't noticed me yet, but the direction it's traveling in is going to put it right on the path that I want to go through. What should I do...?

Hmmm. Maybe I should fight it? I've been wanting to figure out just how effective my silk still is in this heat, but if I still have to fight it head-on, I'm pretty confident, based on the stats I saw just now, that I can beat it.

My foe is right in front of me and it doesn't seem like any other monsters are rearing their ugly heads, so...

Let's give it a shot.

My target hasn't noticed me yet, so let's give it a good pre-emptive strike. Come on, Severing Thread!! I let out a long length of silk, then whip it horizontally in front of me. Since the seahorse wasn't paying any attention to my silk, I aimed right for its head, but my silk simply burned up as it passed over the magma. Fire races up the thread back towards me, and I frantically sever the rest of the thread before I catch fire myself.

Awww, mmmmrgh... Man, is this just hopeless? My silk caught fire without even touching the magma directly. Is my silk seriously going to be completely ineffective in the middle strata? Aaaaargh, seriouslyyy... I've really been stripped of my strongest weapon...? I'd known this was possible but I'm still kinda stunned.

Oh, something's flying this way! It's a fireball, huh. That'll hurt if it hits... but that's big enough that I'll get burnt to a crisp if it hits me, right?

Whoop!

I dodge. I dodge it completely! Oh, but it fired a second one.

Whoop!

The seahorse is spitting fireballs at me from within the magma. Hmm. At the speed they're traveling, there's no way they'll hit me. I may have not been able to dodge that frog's acid spit so long ago, but now my Speed stat is way higher *and* I have an Evasion skill! I'm far more powerful than I was before. Even my speed-specced MMO character is no match for my god-tier evasive ability! I may be made of paper, I may be burned to a crisp in a single hit, but they're never going to actually hit me!

This, however, is, uh, kinda pointless. Neither of us can really do anything. My foe can't land a single fireball on me, and there's no way for me to attack it at range without my silk. We're at a stalemate.

Ah, no, the seahorse's mana is gradually being used up. I guess that fireball attack costs mana? That would mean that it would run out of fireballs once its mana is fully depleted. Lady Appraisal, you truly are OP. You can tell me all I need to know about my enemies in mid-combat!

Alright, I've dodged the last fireball. Now, that thing's mana pool is completely

empty. Its next move will decide the outcome of this battle, but what will it be?

Ah! It crawled out of the magma. And it's charging this way.


What a moron.












If I were in its shoes, I'd be making a strategic retreat right now.

I avoid its charge with room to spare. To my eyes, it's practically moving in slow motion. I latch onto its back as it passes, stab my claws deep into its flesh, and fill it full of venom with my Poison Attack. This thing's super hot, though! My health went down a bit! My precious, precious health!

Regardless, the seahorse, violated by my deadliest toxins, crumples to the ground and rattles out its last breath. Hmm! My debut fight was a resounding success. Though... it seems like, here in the middle strata, my greatest foe is the terrain itself.

[prev](#) • [next](#)

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075 There's things that are totally fine when you do them, but can't stand when people do to you, right?

I'm A Spider, So What? – 075

There's things that are totally fine when you do them, but can't stand when people do to you, right?

I avoid some incoming fireballs. Two of them. Well, dodging two at the same time isn't any huge problem for me. I glance towards their origin and see two seahorses.

It would seem as if this area is packed full of seahorses. Everywhere I look, the magma is infested with them. They aren't really swarming together; they're just kinda wandering about, doing whatever they want to do, but if several of them wind up in the same place, they'll wind up attacking me all at once. Well, these seahorse squads aren't anywhere near as large as the monkey army that attacked me, so this is actually really easy.

I dodge another fireball. These guys don't usually interact with each other very much, so their teamwork is kind of poor. They're just kinda firing off fireballs whenever they feel like it. If you guys don't work together, you're never gonna actually hit me, you knooooow!

It's just... there's *that*. It's depressing. They aren't playing fair, staying in the magma. There's no way for me to actually affect them at all, so this bombardment is reaaaally one-sided. Can't you guys fight me fair and square? Don't you think you're being a little too cowardly? Don't you have any sense of pride?

Hm? My own medicine? I have nooooo clue what you're saying. I don't

understaaaand. I'd neeeever do anything that cowardly, you know? I'd neeeever hide in my nest and attack with impunity, you know? Look at me, I'm such an upstanding and forthright maiden, seeee?

That's right, you know?
Say it. "That's right."

Well, really, these guys aren't shut completely away like I do when I'm in my nest. Look! One of them just ran out of mana. Here it comes!

For some completely unknown reason, these seahorses never retreat back into the safety of the magma. Instead, they come at me directly, no matter the cost. They do say that an emperor should never flee, so do these guys think they're awesome enough to be emperors? Hmm, maybe, they are a little dragon-like, after all. Anyway, when their mana runs out, they climb out of the magma and physically charge me.

After that, it's my game.

I dispose of it immediately with my venom-clad forelegs. The timing's great, too, the other one crawls out of the magma and I deal with it in the same way.

"Experience requirements met. Small Poison Taratekt, you have grown from level 5 to level 6. Every ability score has been increased. Acquired bonus skill proficiencies from leveling up: your skill [Poison Enhancement (LV 2)] skill has been raised to level 3 and your skill [Evasion (LV 3)] has been raised to level 4. You have acquired additional skill points."

Oh! Ding!! I'm grateful for just the full heal alone. I molt quickly, and my health is fully restored.

It's not very difficult to defeat these seahorses, but every time I touch them I take a little bit of damage. It's no big deal when it's just one of them, but when I have to fight them over and over, the accumulated damage is no laughing matter. Right now, I can't recover any health unless I level up, so I don't want to take even the tiniest bit of damage. Incidentally, I can eat these things as long as I give them a little time to cool down first.

I really would have liked my Fire Resistance or Automatic HP Recovery skills to have leveled when I did, but I guess the world just isn't that nice. Fire Resistance

is still stuck at level one, and Automatic HP Recovery hasn't budged at all. I guess I can't do anything about Fire Resistance's lack of growth. After all, it seems like my species is very weak against fire, so trying to overcome that weakness in a single day is definitely asking too much.

Automatic HP Recovery is an extremely useful skill, so of course it levels slowly. Well, auto-healing is usually a pretty lategame skill. To have gotten a skill like this naturally without having to spend skill points on it, and then expecting it to level quickly on top of that is really just being greedy. Getting it in the first place is a blessing in and of itself.

Really, without Automatic HP Recovery, I don't think I'd even be able to try to make it through the middle strata. It'd just be impossible. Charging through an area that constantly deals environmental damage to you without any way to heal that damage is just straight-up suicide. I'm reeeally not interested in killing myself, otherwise I'd still be in the lower strata, looking for a pit to climb up.

Y'know, the lower strata, where the Earth Dragons live.

Welp, another seahorse. If I keep going this way, it'll see me, oh noooo. If I wanted to run away, I probably could, but that's, uh...

Maybe I should try throwing rocks, like those monkeys did? It's probably better than just doing nothing. I can't really hold a rock with my spindly spider legs, but I could stick some silk to it and hurl it like that.


Let's test this out immediately. First, I need to find a decent rock... yeah! There's a decently-sized one. Let's roll it over here, stick a thread to it, and... Hummm, hummm, hummm, WHOOP!











Oh! It hit. That was probably thanks to Throwing and Aiming, huh? Though... it didn't really seem to do much damage. Ah, here comes the counterattack. Another fireball.

After that, we traded rocks and fireballs back and forth for a while, but the seahorse did eventually run out of mana, crawl up on shore, and turn this into a land battle. Hmmm. This is better than doing nothing, but it's not like it's really doing much of anything... Well, if I'm just fighting one of those things, throwing rocks might still be useful. I can grind up Throwing and Aiming, probably. If there's two or more, though, I really should focus on evasion.

Getting hit by one of those fireballs would be no joke.

[prev](#) • [next](#)

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- 
- [9](#)

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S11 Daughter of the Elves

I'm A Spider, So What? – S11

Daughter of the Elves

My father has summoned me. Not just me, but Katia as well. Neither of us have any idea as to why this could be, so we both tilt our heads to the side and ponder.

“This is just a wild guess,” says Katia, “but... maybe he wants to talk about betrothal?”

“Huh? Whose?”

“You know... yours. And mine.”

I am completely and utterly flabbergasted by Katia's ridiculous idea.

“No... no way.”

“Yeah, dude, seriously, it would be way too weird for us. But look at it from everyone else's perspective. We look like a boy and a girl of similar age and pedigree who get along very well. If they *weren't* thinking about marriage it would be weirder.”

When she puts it like that, it doesn't seem to be that strange of an idea. I am a prince of the royal family, and she's the daughter of a duke. It's a good balance, socially.

“But, are you okay with that?” I ask.

“No fucking way, dude. I can't even *imagine* being married to a man. But it's gonna happen sooner or later, so we should really be prepared for it, right?”

“Man, I never thought you'd think about stuff like that.”

“Whoa, rude. But, practically, I'd honestly rather be engaged to you than to some random guy I don't actually know. You know about my current situation, so when it comes down to it we can make a scene and call the whole thing off.”

Ahh, there's that ploy too. I honestly haven't been thinking about a fiancée up

until now, but since I am a son of a royal line, it really would be weird if the question just never came up. It really would be convenient, then, to be engaged to someone like Katia, since we have no actual romantic attraction to each other.

There's just one problem, though.

"Hey, what are we going to do about Sue, then?"

"Ah."

Yeah. My little sister Sue doesn't allow anyone to get close to me at all. She's let her guard down a bit around Katia, but I have no idea what she'll do if the topic of betrothal comes up.

"Yeah," says Katia, "I think she might just kill me."

"That's an exaggeration, right?"

"...It might not be."

Sue has grown up to be one of *those* kinds of girls, but I don't think she'd really go that far.

Meanwhile, two more people have entered the waiting room, a man and a young girl. When Katia and I notice the two of them, our jaws drop in shock. These two people have far longer ears than any human.

"Prince, Lady, good day to you," says the man, in an indifferent tone. "I am Potimus Hyphenas, the elven ambassador to this country. It is a pleasure to make your acquaintances. It is I who have called you here."

This is my first time meeting an elf. I knew that elves existed, but seeing a real live one in front of me is a stark reminder of the fact that we live in a fantasy world.

He squints at us, and a strange, uncomfortable feeling ripples through me.

"Hmm! You do indeed possess it," he says.

"Oka," he says to the girl beside him, "these two both have it. I'll leave them in your care."

"All ri~ight! Leave them to me~!" she says, cheerfully.

"Now, I must take my leave," he says, turning towards the door and quickly walking away. "Thanks for all the he~elp!"

The door shuts behind Potimus, leaving me and Katia completely dumbfounded. We hadn't even had time to introduce ourselves before he hurried out of the room. With no idea what to do, I turn towards the little girl he left behind.

"Hmm, hmmm~! Let me introduce myself. My... current name is Filimes Hyphenas~! It is my pleasure to meet you~!"

Katia and I glance at each other. This strange little girl had just introduced herself, but now we had no idea what to do next.

"Your teacher just introduced herself, so it's only polite for you to do the same, you know~! Who might the two of you be?"

"My apologies," I hurriedly say. "I am the fourth prince of this country, Slaine Zagan Analeicht."

"I am the daughter of the duke of Anabald, Carnatia Seli Anabald." "Hm, hm! A prince and a duchess! Spec-tacular! I'm burning up~!"

I stiffen in my chair. The quirky way she's been talking, her choice of words, her conduct... they're very much like someone I know. Next to me, Katia has come to the exact same realization, and our eyes go wide.

"No way, Oka?!" we yell.

"A~hem, you should call your teacher *Miss Okazaki*, you know~? But you're right!!"²

The individual in front of us is Oka, aka Kanami Okazaki, our homeroom teacher from the previous world.

The teacher we had nicknamed Oka was really quite a deplorable individual. When she was a student, she got really into a particular manga and started imitating how her favorite character talked, and did it for so long that it became her normal speaking voice. She read a lot of manga set in the Warring States period of Japanese history, so she arbitrarily decided to go into the history program at a very prestigious university. She then decided to become a teacher after drafting the Reverse Hikaru Genji Plan¹. A thoroughly deplorable teacher indeed. However, her students really loved that deplorable personality, so she was an incredibly popular teacher.

"So, Miss Okazaki, why have you come to this country?"

"Because I'd heard the two of you were he~ere. You're everywhere in the news,

you know? Several genius prodigies born in the kingdom of Analeicht all at once!!”

Having met our teacher from the other world after all this time, we switch to talking in Japanese, and tell her our old names. When she hears who Katia was, her eyes go wide and she squeals, “I’m burning up~!”

“You came all this way just to see us?”

“No, no, not just tha~t. I mi~ght look like a little elf girl, but I’m still your teacher! Of course I wanted to make sure my beloved students are all safe, you kno~ow! Well, if ‘safety’ really means anything after we’ve been reincarnated~!”

She might be acting like it’s a joke, but I think she’s really sincere about it. Since I came here, I haven’t been thinking about anyone’s life but my own. It never occurred to me that I should seek out my other classmates.

“This world’s also wa~ay more dangerous than Japa~an! I need to find you all sooner rather than later so that I can make sure you’re safe, you know~!”

That’s another thing that I hadn’t even considered. There’s monsters in this world! It’s an easy mistake to make, but since I was so safe, I just arbitrarily assumed that the rest of my classmates were safe too.

“So, Miss Okazaki, have you come to protect us?”

“No, no! You two have such lofty positions that there’s no~o way you’d be able to just walk out of here. The others are normal people, though, so all they needed to do was ask if they wanted to seek shelter in the elven village~!”

“So, that means you’ve found some of the others already?” “Ye~ep! Twelve people are already in the elven village, and we’ve been in contact with five more students, including you two~. We’ve been able to find two more of you, so they’re the next stop on my tri~ip!

Our class had twenty-five students. So this means that there are six students that still haven’t been located at all. On the other hand, however, that means that *only* six students haven’t been found. In such a huge world as this, finding as many people as she did must have been an enormous amount of work.

“Miss Okazaki, you’re working so hard for our sakes,” I say.

“Of course I am~, It’s my duty as your teacher! Plus, most of you guys have

been in the human lands, so it's not like getting to you guys was ha~ard!"

Even so, it is obvious that Miss Okazaki has been putting a tremendous amount of work into this. I bow to her once more.

"We~ell," she says, "I'm sure we have a lot to talk abo~ut, but I'm going to be enrolling in the academy here soo~on! I'll be expecting a detailed account from both of you then~!"

Katia and I will also both be enrolling in the academy shortly. Our new lives are coming at us quickly.

Translator's notes for this chapter:


1. This is a reference to Hikaru Genji, the protagonist of The Tale of Genji, a piece of classical Japanese literature. Assumedly, the "Hikaru Genji Plan" is a recreation of the part of the story where he, a grown man, raises a young girl with the intent of marrying her. The Reverse Hikaru Genji Plan would seem to involve a grown woman (the teacher?) raising a boy to marry.







1.1. God **damn**.



2. Miss Okazaki speaks in Japanese by drawing out the last vowel of literally e~very sentence. It's pre~etty aggravating to read! I've tried to preserve as much of the tone as I possibly ca~an!

2.1. God **da~amn**!

[prev](#) • [next](#)

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076 Turn up the heat!

I'm A Spider, So What? – 076

Turn up the heat!

My runthrough of the middle strata is going pretty well. I've encountered a few other species of monsters besides just seahorses, but none of them were really worth mentioning. If it weren't for the environmental hazards, there's no way I'd lose. Really, all of my problems come as a result of the environment.

First off: magma. What a pain! If my opponent hides in the magma, I can't do anything but hurl rocks at them, which does barely any damage at all. Practically, I can't do anything at all to them if they don't crawl up onto solid ground.

It's great when they act like the seahorses do and just blithely hop out of the magma when they run out of mana, but there's some monsters that stay put in the magma and, even worse, some who just run away. There's also the ones that start out on solid ground, but then dive into the magma to flee when I corner them.

Not being able to use my silk at all is another huge pain. I'm able to use it for things like throwing rocks around, but it'll always catch fire eventually, even if it just sits on the ground. The biggest problem here is that my body constantly produces silk whenever I move, laying down a thread wherever I go. In here, this thread catches fire. The flames then race up the line like a fuse, straight towards my increasingly hot butt. This is, by the way, not a metaphor. The first time it happened, my butt literally caught fire, causing me to run around in panicked circles. That cost me a lot of health. I managed to put myself out, but at even greater cost. I doused myself with liquid from the only source I had: Poison Synthesis.

Ever since, I've had no choice but to constantly stop and cut off the line that I'm unconsciously laying. If I don't do that, my butt will be on fire. Not metaphorically.

Sleeping is another problem! Ideally, I'd build a nest to sleep in, but a nest would obviously catch fire in this environment. I had no choice but to abandon that hope and instead try to sleep in the shadows of large rocks.

Try, of course, being the operative word here. I'm trying to sleep in the middle of a scorching hell, constantly scared of being crept up on by a monster. No matter how brazen and bold I may be, guts can only get me so far. However, sleeping is a must. I haven't exactly been getting any *good* sleep, but whenever I find a suitable rock to hide under I do try to lie down for a while.

Well, even though the environment is much rougher up here than it was down in the lower strata, this place's one redeeming quality is that the monsters are so weak. It doesn't feel like there's much of a difference between the monsters here and the ones back in the upper strata. There could, of course, be a middle-strata equivalent to the unusually powerful snake that was in the upper strata, but for now every monster I've met has been weak.

The biggest difference between upper- and middle-strata monsters seems to be how well they use the terrain to their advantage. Thanks to that, all of the relatively weak monsters here are way tougher to kill than they should be. Seriously, I don't mind at all when it's me who has the environmental edge, but it is such a pain when my opponents have it instead.

Well, there's a lot of things to dislike about this place, but I don't think it's entirely impossible. My sheer diligence in leveling has made me quite a bit stronger. If I keep facing enemies like these, I'm still able to win even despite the disadvantage. However, since I still don't have very many ways to heal myself, every hit I take puts me in a bigger pinch. Carelessness is forbidden.

Besides, there's still one more thing that's particularly troubling about the monsters down here.

Ahead of me, I see three of them.

Elro Pyeku — LV 8

Statistics:

HP: 164/164 (green)

MP: 166/168 (blue)

SP: 175/175 (yellow), 176/181 (red)

Avg. Offense: 137
Avg. Defense: 123
Avg. Magic Power: 121
Avg. Resistance: 117
Avg. Speed: 143
Failed to appraise statistics.

Elro Pyeku — LV 8
Statistics:

HP: 163/163 (green)
MP: 169/170 (blue)
SP: 174/174 (yellow), 170/183 (red)
Failed to appraise statistics.

Elro Pyeku — LV 8
Statistics:

HP: 166/166 (green)
MP: 169/169 (blue)
SP: 177/177 (yellow), 178/182 (red)
Failed to appraise statistics.

These things look kind of like bright red dogs. They're actually kind of cute on the outside, but these jerks are actually *really* nasty, especially when it comes to dealing with me.

First of all, their noses are incredibly good. Like, y'know, dogs. They aren't even the slightest bit affected by my Stealth skill. As a result, I'm never able to attack them by surprise like I usually do. ...Well, I haven't been able to do that much in the middle strata anyway, but that's not important.

The next thing, though. Their bodies are covered in flame.

That's right! These dogs aren't just colored red, they're on fire! It's not like I can do anything to them while they're set ablaze like that. Just touching them directly would deal me a ton of damage. That's the biggest problem with middle-strata monsters: their bodies are all extremely hot.

Even if they're not always on fire like the dogs are, their bodies are still

dangerously hot to the touch. The seahorses are like that, for example. So, whenever I touch them, I take damage. I can endure it when I have to kill the seahorses, but the amount of damage I'd take from killing something that's literally on fire wouldn't be something I could just shrug off.

I've had to come up with a few countermeasures of my own.


I dodge the dogs as they charge at me. They may be decently fast, but compared to my speed it's like they're moving through mud. Dodging them is no trouble at all.









I weave around the first two dogs, then leap high over the third. As I soar over its head, I activate Poison Synthesis.

Smothered by my powerful venom, the dog stumbles, falls, and skids to a stop. Not only is my venom especially deadly, but it seems like none of the monsters in this area have any levels in Poison Resistance. So, defeating these things is a piece of cake: just pour toxins on them until they stop moving. I don't have to touch them at all, so there's no need for me to take any damage.

My venom puts the two remaining pitiful dogs out of their misery.

[prev](#) • [next](#)

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077Unlucky number seven

I'm A Spider, So What? – 077

Unlucky number seven

I've got a baaad feeling. The seahorses, you see, are “drakes”.¹

***Drake:** A species of monster considered to be an inferior form of a dragon. While they may be considered inferior to dragons, there do exist drakes that can rival a dragon in power.*

Yeah. A monster that's an inferior form of something like that Earth Dragon. Putting it in system terms, it's, what, a Fire Drake? Since there's an Earth Dragon, there's got to be a Fire Dragon, huh... There can't be anything like that in the middle strata, can there? I really hope not.

Well then, I kind of let my mind escape from reality for a little there, but let's switch focus to the problem that's right in front of me.

Elro Geneseven — LV 7
Statistics:

HP: 461/461 (green)
MP: 223/223 (blue)
SP: 218/218 (yellow), 451/466 (red)
Avg. Offense: 368
Avg. Defense: 311
Avg. Magic Power: 161
Avg. Resistance: 158
Avg. Speed: 155
Failed to appraise statistics.

***Elro Geneseven:** A low-ranking species of monster, related to the drakes, that inhabits the middle strata of the Great Elro Labyrinth. It is omnivorous,*

and will swallow anything with its enormous mouth.

This monster is swimming lazily around in the magma. It may be some kind of lesser drake, but from where I'm standing it really looks more like some kind of catfish. Also, it doesn't really give off the kind of vibe that I'd expect off of a creature with "seven" in its name. Well, it's not like I can do much about this world's naming conventions, even if I have a problem.

Its defining characteristic really does seem to be its enormous mouth, just like a catfish. Man, there's no waaaay getting swallowed by that thing is going to turn out well for me. At my size, I think I'd fit in there quite nicely.

Appraisal did a great job getting me this guy's stats. Generally, it seems that Appraisal's success rate for getting detailed stats is something like one in three. I'm really lucky that this was the one that hit. Charging in at this catfish without a solid understanding of its stats would have been extremely dangerous. I've only ever seen weak monsters here in the middle strata, but this catfish is way stronger than the rest.

If possible, I'd like to pass straight through here. However, that catfish is swimming very close to the path I'd like to take. Based on all the trends so far, getting caught up in a battle is pretty likely.

Hmmmmmm. What do I do...? Well, I did consider that running away could be an option thanks to my incredible speed, but that thing's huge red stamina gauge means that I might be in real trouble if it decides to keep pursuing me forever. Its yellow bar is smaller, but "small" is a relative term; it's over twice the size of my own. Plus, I can't see any of the skills it has... If it maybe has Automatic SP Recovery at a high level, then it would be the worst monster I could possibly try to run away from. Well, this is still all in my head, though.

It looks like it would be pretty good in a fight. I should really run away, right? Yeah. I shouldn't do anything rash. I've been on a roll lately, but I've definitely had a lot of really painful experiences after getting too cocky. Even I can learn from experience! I'm not going to get carried away here. I'm going to proceed with caution and modesty.

So, on that note, let's start slowly moving forward. If it spots me, I'll take off at maximum speed.

Suddenly, another catfish rises from the depths and breaks through the surface of the magma with a splash, very close to me.

Huh? Whoa?! That's not right! I didn't get carried away at all but I still got myself into this much trouble?!

The catfish and I lock eyes. For a brief moment, we stare blankly at each other, then it opens its enormous mouth.

Backstep!! The catfish's mouth closes on the spot where I was just a moment ago. It came up on land so casually. This guy... I didn't notice them before since they were hidden beneath the magma, but this thing's got arms and legs! On top of that, it's covered in dragon-like scales! Its defense stat really is high.

Yeah.

Time to go.

Guh?! When I turn to the path I want to escape along, I see that the catfish I saw earlier has crawled up onto the land as well! In a place like this, how am I supposed to run away from a pincer attack?!

What do I do?! Uhhhhh, in times like this I've got no choice: I need to take down the catfish right in front of me, now!

I wrap my Poison Thread around the catfish. Even if it's going to burn immediately, please, just get a little bit of poison applied! It, of course, burns up immediately. I glance up at the catfish's health indicator, trying to figure out if my poison had any effect. Sure enough, the catfish's health has gone down by just a little bit. It looks like poison is indeed effective. So, my next step is to administer some poison.

The catfish opens its mouth wide as it immediately starts to charge towards me. WhhoaAA! That was close!! But I still nailed it! I stood my ground until the catfish was right on top of me, then used Poison Synthesis and just barely managed to make it away unscathed! By a razor's edge!

Its mouth snaps shut on a big glob of poison instead of on me. Instantly, its health starts to plummet at a rate that is seriously no joke. And, just as you'd expect, the catfish is writhing around on the ground in agony. Ohh! My poison's getting pretty good, isn't it...

Now, who's next?! I glance around, looking for my other opponent, and see that it has just straight-up bolted after watching its comrade meet such a terrible end. O... oh. I guess that it's only natural to think that I'm super dangerous, after watching your ally fall so quickly and painfully. I never thought that a drake would ever try to escape, but I guess that might just be those seahorses.

So, just like that, the healthy catfish turns around and flees back the way it came. Seriously...? I thought I was going to be the one running away from this. There's no waaaay I would have thought that I'd see my enemy fleeing instead. Is... is it okay if I get a little carried away, now? I'm really tough now, right?

Next up, I put an end to the poisoned catfish by splashing more venom on its face with Poison Synthesis. It convulses once more, then lies still.

“Experience requirements met. Small Poison Taratekt, you have grown from level 6 to level 7. Every ability score has been increased. Acquired bonus skill proficiencies from leveling up: your skill [Concentration (LV 9)] has been raised to level 10, your skill [Evasion (LV 4)] has been raised to level 5, and your skill [Vitality (LV 7)] has been raised to level 8. Your [Concentration (LV 10)] skill has reached its maximum level, and a new skill, [Accelerated Thought (LV 1)] has been unlocked. You have acquired additional skill points.”










Hm? When I leveled, it looks like Concentration maxed out.

Translator's notes for this chapter:

1. I'm translating as “drake” and as “dragon”. Both characters actually just mean “dragon”, and they're read the same, but has a somewhat more impactful feel to it. Drake, in this sense, is in the Dungeons and Dragons sense of the word: drakes are dragon-like creatures, but generally weaker.

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078...What an amazing skill.

I'm A Spider, So What? – 078

...What an amazing skill.

Concentration hit max level, which I was actually kinda looking forward to. Let's use Appraisal and check out the new derived skill that I got.

***Accelerated Thought:** Accelerates the speed of the user's thoughts, expanding the user's perception of time.*

...What an amazing skill.

No, isn't it actually even more unbelievable than that? Its practical effect is, uh, *that*, right? Making time appear to slow down, right? Like that thing that top-class athletes say they get sometimes, where they can see the ball moving in slow motion, right? Does this let me activate that whenever I want? That's absurd, right?

Let's try it immediately. Hmm... No problems turning it on. So, how does it feel?

Hmm? Doesn't it look like the magma is moving a just little bit more slowly? There's also some kind of uncomfortable sensation. All of the sensations in my body feel... kinda fast and kinda slow at the same time. It's really strange, I don't think I can really describe it. To test it out, I try moving my body. It feels... weird, somehow, kinda like I'm moving underwater. Like my body is lagging just a little behind my thoughts. So, this what Accelerated Thought's like by default, huh... I've definitely gotten carried away by my own speed before, so maybe I should activate this when I run at top speed.

...Huh? Uh, is this actually costing me anything? Neither my mana or stamina are decreasing at all. So, is this maybe a passive skill, designed to be always on by default? It seems like I can turn it on and off, but is there any downside to

leaving it on all the time? Man, isn't this amazing?

I was totally expecting this to cost me mana. Like, it would cost me some mana and would only last for a few seconds at a time, something like that. I can have it on anytime, anywhere, for no cost? Isn't this a ridiculously unbelievable skill?

There aren't any real downsides. If I had to dig for one, I'd maybe say that this laggy sensation is going to be kind of uncomfortable until I get used to it. Man, I think I've seriously managed to stumble on an amazingly OP skill!

Proficiency requirements met. Your skill, [Prediction (LV 9)] has been raised to level 10. Your [Prediction] skill has reached its maximum level and has evolved into a new skill, [Foresight (LV 1)].“

Oh, see ya, Prediction. Now that I think about it, I guess you were also just a little ways away from maxing out. Well, you were a pretty useless skill, so let's see if your evolved friend is a little more useful, huh?

***Foresight:** Strengthen's the user's predictive abilities. Furthermore, allows the user to see the possible outcomes of the immediate future.*

Hm? Possible future outcomes? What do you mean?

Well, first off, let's activate it. Hmm. This one went on without problem either. But, what actually changed?

Ah, wait. The magma's movements look a little weirder now. Did it get a little bit blurry, here and there? Wait, no, it... looks like a bunch of images are stacked on top of each other. Are these stacked-up sections what the description was calling possible outcomes?

This is what you'd call seeing the future, right? Well, it's not something that I can trust entirely because they do say it's a prediction, but if I train this skill up enough it might turn into something *really* useful. There aren't very many spots where the magma looks stacked up right now, so I don't really see this being very useful right now.

Huh? Wait, hang on, hang on. This isn't costing me anything either? Is... this another passive skill? ...What an amazing skill.

I never would have thought that such a good-for-nothing little brat as Prediction could turn out to be such an amazing treasure trove. Forgive me, Prediction. Even worthless kids can make something of themselves if they try hard.

“Proficiency requirements met. Your skill, [Appraisal (LV 8)] has been raised to level 9.”

The former worthless kid makes her appearance! Madam Appraisal! What, may I ask, will this level up bring? Please, allow me to see for myself immediately!

Small Poison Taratekt — LV 7 — (no name)

Statistics:

HP: 88/88 (green)

MP: 185/185 (blue)

SP: 88/88 (yellow), 88/88 (red) +612

Avg. Offense: 109

Avg. Defense: 108

Avg. Magic Power: 139

Avg. Resistance: 173

Avg. Speed: 956

Skills:

[Automatic HP Recovery (LV 5)] •

[Accelerated MP Recovery (LV 3)] •

[MP Consumption Reduction (LV 2)] •

[Accelerated SP Recovery (LV 2)] •

[SP Consumption Reduction (LV 3)] •

[Damage Enhancement (LV 1)] • [Slashing Enhancement (LV 1)] •

[Poison Enhancement (LV 3)] • [Battle Spirit (LV 1)] •

[Willpower Allocation (LV 2)] • [Greater Poison Attack (LV 3)] •

[Poison Synthesis (LV 7)] • [Thread Talent (LV 3)] •

[Spider Silk (LV 9)] • [Severing Thread (LV 6)] •

[Thread Manipulation (LV 8)] • [Throwing (LV 7)] • [3-

D Maneuvering (LV 4)] • [Concentration (LV 10)] •

[Accelerated Thought (LV 1)] • [Foresight (LV 1)] •

[Multitasking (LV 4)] • [Computation (LV 6)] • [Aiming (LV 8)] •

[Evasion (LV 5)] • [Appraisal (LV 9)] • [Detection (LV 6)] •

[Stealth (LV 7)] • [Hell] • [Black Magic (LV 3)] •
[Shadow Magic (LV 2)] • [Poison Magic (LV 2)] •
[Abyssal Magic (LV 10)] • [Pride] • [Overeating (LV 7)] •
[Night Vision (LV 10)] • [Visible Spectrum Expansion (LV 2)] •
[Damage Resistance (LV 1)] • [Bashing Resistance (LV 2)] •
[Slashing Resistance (LV 3)] • [Fire Resistance (LV 1)] •
[Greater Poison Resistance (LV 2)] • [Paralysis Resistance (LV 3)] •
[Petrification Resistance (LV 3)] • [Acid Resistance (LV 4)] •
[Decay Resistance (LV 3)] • [Fainting Resistance (LV 2)] •
[Fear Resistance (LV 7)] • [Black Magic Resistance (LV 3)] •
[Ignore Pain] • [Pain Tolerance (LV 7)] • [Enhanced Vision (LV 8)] •
[Enhanced Hearing (LV 8)] • [Enhanced Smell (LV 7)] •
[Enhanced Taste (LV 5)] • [Enhanced Touch (LV 6)] •
[Vitality (LV 8)] • [Mana Pool (LV 8)] • [Alacrity (LV 8)] •
[Endurance (LV 8)] • [Greater Strength (LV 3)] •
[Greater Toughness (LV 3)] • [Resistance (LV 3)] •
[Kartikya (LV 3)] • [Taboo (LV 4)] • []

Skill points available: 220

Titles:

[Filth Eater] • [Kin Eater] • [Assassin] • [Monster Slayer] •
[Poison User] • [Silk User] • [Merciless] • [Monster Slaughterer] •
[Lord of Pride]

O... ohhh!! I can see my titles, now! I have been keenly interested this for a while now.










Also, what's this number next to my red stamina gauge? Is this my Overeating stock, maybe? Man, I've got a lot of that. No wonder my stamina never goes down.

Now then, shall we start appraising all of my titles?

[prev](#) • [next](#)

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079What do you mean, I'm a spider full of sinister titles?

I'm A Spider, So What? – 079

What do you mean, I'm a spider full of sinister titles?

Now that the good Lady Appraisal can give me information about my titles, let's get right to the details.

***Title:** Enhancement code that may be obtained by fulfilling special requirements. Upon acquisition, may grant up to two skills. Some titles may include special effects or provide statistical bonuses.*

Huh, really... Titles don't just grant me a couple of skills. I really did think that was all they did. Ooh, that might mean that my titles give me bonus effects that I just didn't notice before. I'm really starting to look forward to this Appraisal spree. Now then, *let's go!!*

***Filth Eater:** Granted skills – [Poison Resistance (LV 1)] and [Decay Resistance (LV 1)]. Acquisition criteria – Consume a significant amount of poisoned or otherwise fouled material within a set amount of time. Effect – Strengthen's the holder's stomach. Description – A title awarded to those who eat nothing but poison.*

Ah... yeah. Ah, yes, that *is* right, everything I have been eating since I was reborn *has* indeed been poisonous in some way or another. So, I guess I can't really complain about being called "Filth Eater". Or, rather, it did make my stomach stronger... Well, I have been eating a lot of poison things, so I guess it was unexpectedly kinda useful, even if I didn't know it. Filth Eater also gave me Decay Resistance, so I'm very grateful that it spared me from instant death that one time I tried eating a snail-bug. I'm just... not happy about the name.

Kin Eater: *Granted skills – [Taboo (LV 1)] and [Corruption Magic (LV 1)]. Acquisition criteria – Devour a blood relative. Effect – None. Description – A title awarded to those who have eaten their kin.*

Effect: None. Was there any real meaning behind earning this? No matter how you think about it, this is a title you absolutely don't want to acquire, right? It gives you a rank in Taboo, which seems to be a detrimental skill. Sure, it also gives Corruption Magic, but I have no idea how that actually works so I can't really count that as a plus. Right now, this title is doing nothing but dragging me down...

Assassin: *Granted skills – [Stealth (LV 1)] and [Shadow Magic (LV 1)]. Acquisition criteria – Achieve a set rate of success in executing surprise attacks. Effect – Provides a damage bonus to the first strike of a surprise attack. Description – A title awarded to those who repeatedly assassinate their targets.*

Ohhhh! The skills were already assassin-like, but this bonus effect really sells it. This is a ninja title. There's no mistake: ninjas are assassins too. Am I going to eventually be able to sneak up behind someone and decapitate them barehanded? Oh, well, for me, "barehanded" includes the claws on my forelegs, so I thiiiiink I might actually be able to do it already.

Monster Slayer: *Granted skills – [Strength (LV 1)] and [Toughness (LV 1)]. Acquisition criteria – Slay a certain number of monsters. Effect – Increases the damage dealt to monster opponents. Description – A title awarded to those who those who have defeated many monsters.*

Ahhh. so it really is based on the number of monsters you murder, huhhhh... I don't really have an accurate idea of what the "certain number" is for the requirement, but I'd killed quiiiiite a few monsters by the time I got it. The effect is pretty tasty, too, so I'm pretty happy overall with this result.

Poison User: *Granted skills – [Poison Synthesis (LV 1)] and [Poison Magic (LV 1)]. Acquisition criteria – Use a certain amount of poison. Effect – Strengthens the holder's Poison attribute. Description – A title awarded to those who use poison.*

My first ridiculously useful title. I am unbelievably grateful for Poison Synthesis. Now that I see it, the effect is amazing as well. It's like this title was

made just for me. If I could actually use Poison Magic, then I'd have zero complaints at all. Hmm, the acquisition criteria just says "use a certain amount of poison," I wonder if the potency doesn't actually have any effect? If that's the case, then it makes sense for why it took me so long to get the title, despite me constantly using poison attacks from the day I was born. I wouldn't have needed very much poison at all to meet that threshold, otherwise, since my own venom is so powerful.

Silk User: *Granted skills – [Thread Manipulation (LV 1)] and [Severing Thread (LV 1)]. Acquisition criteria – Perform a certain number of attacks using threads. Effect: Strengthen's the offensive power of the holder's threads. Description – A title awarded to those who wield thread as a weapon.*

My second ridiculously useful title: a title that massively powered up my main weapon. ...Except I can't use it at all in the middle strata!! Regardless, I've got a good handle on it now that I can see the acquisition criteria, effects, and description: this is a title for people who *attack* using thread. Me, though, I use my silk mostly for its adhesion, huuhhh... I wonder if that counts more as an attack or more as support. Because, you know, it took me a really long time to get this title, too, so maybe webs and traps don't get counted as attacks. Did I only start earning points towards it when I started using things like the Silken Smasher and my throwing nets? If I'd known about this earlier, I could have picked it up a looooot more easily.

Merciless: *Granted skills – [Corruption Magic (LV 1)] and [Corruption Resistance (LV 1)]. Acquisition criteria – Perform truly merciless actions. Effect – Prevents the holder from feeling guilt. Description – A title awarded to those who have shown no mercy.*

That's kind of vague. Put a little more effort into your explanations, please. What does that acquisition criteria even mean? Hmmm... this effect, too, is really questionable. The entire thing is questionable, really.

Monster Slaughterer: *Acquired Skills – [Greater Strength (LV 1)] and [Greater Toughness (LV 1)]. Acquisition criteria – Slay a certain number of monsters. Effect – Increases the damage dealt to monster opponents. Description – A title awarded to those who have defeated a great many monsters.*

Yep. This is straight-up just the next rank of Monster Slayer. Probably, if you keep killing a lot of monsters after getting Monster Slayer, you get Monster Slaughterer. Based on the effect and the description, that seems to be the case.

Lord of Pride: *Acquired Skills – [Abyssal Magic (LV 10)] and [Hell]. Acquisition criteria – Acquire the skill [Pride]. Effect – Increases the holder’s mana, magic, and resistance statistics. Increases the rate of proficiency gain towards mental skills. Grants the holder a Ruler’s Privileges. Description: A title awarded to those who rule over Pride.*

...Wait. For a bunch of different reasons, wait. What the heck is that effect? Are you the one responsible for that massive stat jump?! And, on top of that, you’ve been boosting my skill proficiency gain too?! *On top of* the bonus that the Pride skill itself was giving me?! No wonder Prediction was rocketing up like that!

But, what was that about “Ruler’s Privileges”?

Ruler’s Privileges: *The authority bestowed upon a Ruler to control a part of the world.*

Huh? What the heck is that? Is that something I can use?










“Activation request of Ruler’s Privileges by the Lord of Pride has been received. There is no authority that the Lord of Pride may invoke in the present situation.”

Of coooourse not!! Seriously, what the heck is this?! Pride is still such a freaking mystery.

Well, I guess I learned a lot of things about titles. The good Lady Appraisal is really is pretty reliable!

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080Spider vs. Fire Drake (1)

I'm A Spider, So What?! – 080

Spider vs. Fire Drake (1)

Now that I'm satisfied with my Appraisal results, the catfish has cooled down enough that I can eat it. The big bottleneck here in the middle layer is that all the monsters are super hot like this, and I need to wait a while for them to cool down before I can eat them, y'knooow. Even if you let it sit for a little while, the insides are still piping hot even though the surface cools down a bit, so if I'm not careful I'll take some damage. I don't like having to put this much effort into eating...

Whoa, this catfish is delicious. Seriously?! This is the first time in my entire life as a spider that I'm actually getting to eat something delicious! Oh crud... I let the other one of these things escape. Wait, no, if I start chasing now, I can probably catch up, right? Its speed isn't particularly high, so I can probably still make it if I tried, right? Aaaargh, but it escaped into the magma, didn't it, so I really can't do anything about it. Damn it, I messed that up... Well, for now, let's savor this catfish.

"Proficiency requirements met. Your skill, [Enhanced Taste (LV 5)] has been raised to level 6."

Deeeelicioooooos... My entire life was worth it... Seriously tastyyyyy... Of course, it doesn't compare with a lot of the things I ate in my previous life, but I've eaten nothing but unappetizing garbage since being reborn. Finally, *finally*, have I met a creature that is truly delicious.

It's not like I was a picky eater in my previous life or anything. It's just that I didn't know how good I had it until I was reborn as a spider. I'm so sick of eating disgusting monster meat! I want to eat delicious things!

Right! Let's hunt some catfish. No need to worry about things like how the

catfish are a little on the strong side. I will put my life on the line to satisfy this craving! This is simply that valuable to me. Now then, wait for me, catfish! I will feast on you until you're all extinct!

Caaaatfiiiish! Oh, caa~aatfiiiish! Where aaaare you, caaatfiiiish?

I've been wandering around the labyrinth, looking for catfish. There aren't any. They kept popping up one after another when I didn't want to see them, but now that I do, they can't be found anywhere! Get out here, quickly! Get out here, and then get in my belly.

And, at a time like this, a totally different jerk shows up.

Elro Generash — LV 8

Statistics:

HP: 170/170 (green)

MP: 161/161 (blue)

SP: 158/158 (yellow), 156/167 (red)

Avg. Offense: 87

Avg. Defense: 84

Avg. Magic Power: 84

Avg. Resistance: 81

Avg. Speed: 91

Skills:

[Fire Drake (LV 1)] • [Aiming (LV 4)] • [Swimming (LV 4)] •
[Heat Nullification]

Three seahorses have appeared. When I look at their stats, one seahorse's results has a brand new addition. Ahh, that's it!! The Lady Appraisal leveled up, so now she's showing me my target's skills! Whoa! M'lady, you are truly starting to look a little bit OP!

But, uh, Mister Seahorse, don't you have a few too few skills? Like, you have four. They look so lonely! No wonder you don't really seem as strong as your stats would show. And, on top of that, all of your skills are low level except for Heat Nullification, which is obviously the max-level version of Fire Resistance.

Well, let's start by appraising these new skills.

Fire Drake: *A unique skill bestowed on the Fire Drakes. Grants special abilities and effects based on the level of the skill. Available skills: Breathe Fireball (LV 1)*

Swimming: *Assists the user in swimming.*

Hmm. Like I thought, Fire Drake is a special skill that Fire Drakes get just for existing, like I started with Spider Silk. At level one, it doesn't seem like they can do anything besides just shooting fireballs. Hey, wait, this thing is level eight, but its Fire Drake skill level is only level one, hm. I wonder if it's just really hard to raise the level, or if this thing has just been slacking on its skill development?

Swimming seems to just be a skill that makes you good at swimming. Yep. After looking at that skill list, it's even more obvious: there's no way I can lose against these things.

Well then! Let's quickly get rid... well, okay, getting rid of them is not going to be quick. They are, you know, still in the magma. All I can do from here is chuck small rocks at them. Oh, wait, though, couldn't I synthesize some deadly venom and then coat the rocks in it?

Let's try this out. First step: dodge the incoming while looking for stones to throw. Hm! Accelerated Thought is really pulling its weight. Dodging incoming attacks from three angles seems like the kind of thing I should be putting my full attention into, but I'm thinking so fast that I have plenty of time to plan out my counterattacks.

I face the stone and synthesize some poison. Okay, okay! The poison's sticking to the stone, so... HEAVE!

My rock sails through the air and clocks one of the seahorses square on. How much damage did it do...? Ughhh. Barely any. I guess this is better than doing nothing, but not really by very much. I guess the amount of poison that I can actually stick on a stone isn't going to be able to stick to an opponent, huh...


My Deadly Spider Venom has two kinds of damage: contact damage and absorption damage. Contact damage is dealt when the venom touches the target's skin, while absorption damage is what happens when the target ingests the








poison. My venom's absorption damage is vastly more powerful than its contact damage. The contact damage may be comparatively weak, but it's sticky, and if it stays on the target for long enough, its damage suddenly skyrockets. After all, you see, the poison will eventually just get absorbed through the skin; in other words, the contact poison becomes an absorbed poison. Well, if the target washes it off before then, it's a totally different story.

Thus, if I'm facing a monster that can't actually wash its body off, I don't really need to aim for its mouth. I can just stick it basically anywhere on its body. If I'm in a hurry, then my targets are of course the mouth and the eyes, but if I want to be as safe as possible I should aim where I've got the greatest chance of doing some real damage. It, of course, depends on the situation.

And, just like that, the seahorses are starting to just casually wander over here one by one as their mana runs out. These guys have tiny little mouths, so I think I'm going to splash my poison all over~!

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S12The Academy

I'm A Spider, So What? – S12

The Academy

This country has places called “academies”. In my previous world, it was only natural for every child to attend school, but in this world, the number of kids who do is actually rather small. Generally, the people who do are the nobility, the aristocracy, and any of the commoners who are particularly affluent or have extraordinary amounts of talent.

Since I'm royalty, attending the academy is no problem for me. Sue is in the same position, and Katia's cleared because she's the daughter of a duke. In was decided that the three of us would all enroll in the academy at the same time.

Like schools in my original world, academies instruct their students in general studies. At the same time, we also receive instruction specifically about combat. The continent of Daztordia which we live in is the domain of humanity, but the other continents are still plagued with battles against monsters and demons. There are also monsters here in Daztordia, and there aren't enough people here to fight back against them. So, the academy gives us plenty of lessons about how to fight.

Sue, Katia and I have gathered in the school's assembly hall for the matriculation ceremony. Many other new students are seated around us, waiting for the ceremony to start. This academy is one of the largest in the area, and many students from foreign countries are sent all the way here to attend. Here and there, I can see demihumans in the crowd. When I look around the crowd, some of the students quickly avert their eyes while others stare at me. Sometimes, I sense people looking at me and can hear rumors whispered through the crowd.

“Hey, look over there. It's the prince of this country.”

“They say he's supposed to be a genius, but he doesn't look that strong at a glance.”

“I wonder if I can get acquainted with him somehow?”

A lot of things are being said about me, but thanks to Enhanced Hearing, I can hear everything. It’s really making me uncomfortable.

“Good moooorning~!”

A carefree voice rings out, completely shattering the gloomy atmosphere. I turn around and, as expected, see Oka; or, rather, Filimes of the Elves.

“Good morning,” I reply. “It’s very weird to see our teacher become a student.”
“I’m getting to experience the thrill of youth a second time! I’m suuuuper excited!”

Miss Okazaki sits down in the seat next to me. Sue, seated on my other side, gives her a stony glare. Well, perhaps I shouldn’t call it a glare, she might be just staring at her normally. Now that I think about it, this is the first time she’s seen Miss Okazaki, isn’t it?

In the next instant, chills run down my spine.

“Shun’s little sister,” says Miss Okazaki with a brilliant smile, “if you look at me with that kind of bloodlust again, I’m gonna kill yooou~!”

As always, her tone is light and carefree. Her smile, however, does not reach her eyes. Even Sue feels the weight of her pressure.

Katia and I are shocked at that expression. Oka’s got such a cute nickname because she’s always so charming. She was always very friendly, and never got angry with anyone. She was never the kind of person who’d release such a chilling aura of bloodlust, even when someone made a serious mistake.

“Haha, did I sca~are you? If I want to survive in this world, I got to be able to do at least that much~! Elves mature fa~ar more slowly than humans do, so people tend to look down on us when we’re liiiittle, but if you want to pick a fight with this little teacher, you’d better be ready to die, oka~aay?”

Miss Okazaki must have faced down some unimaginable troubles for her to be able to use words like “ready to die” so seriously. Sneakily, I use my recently-leveled Appraisal skill on her.

Appraisal has been blocked.

“Shun,” she says, smacking me on the head, “it’s not very polite to look at a lady’s profile without her permission! I didn’t raise my students to be peeping toms!”

I don’t know how she did it, but it looks like Miss Okazaki can detect, block, and counter Appraisal attempts. On top of that, it’s a method that I couldn’t react to at all. Just based on that, I know that I won’t be able to beat her.

“I’m sorry. I was just curious.”

“Yep. When you do something bad, it’s best to apologize! But the next time you Appraise me without my permission, it’ll be a lot more unpleasant for you, okay?”

“Yes, ma’am. I will remember that.”

Seriously. Against this kind of opponent, I shouldn’t do anything impudent.

Suddenly, a doubt pops into my mind. “But, Miss Okazaki, if you’re already that strong, there’s no need for you to attend the academy, is there?”

Truthfully, although Sue, Katia, and I have been constantly training, we don’t have any actual combat experience. So, we’re here at the Academy to work on perfecting our fundamentals. Miss Okazaki, however, seems to have already had loads of real combat experience piled up on top of her, given the way she talks and how powerful she seems to be. So, why does she need to study here at the academy?

“There is~! There’s loads of things for me to study here! But that’s only half of it. In the short term, I’m going to be using this country as my base of operations!”

“But you don’t need to go to the academy for that...”

“I’m not talking about searching for the other students.”

“...Uh, then, ...what?”

“That’s still a secret, but I’m leaving the rest of the search to the elves!”

Her shocking remark causes my back to stiffen. The last time we met, she said that she still hadn’t managed to find six of our classmates. What could possibly cause her to abandon that quest?

“I know it might sound a li~ttle bit heartless to say, but I’ve done all I can in my search! The only places left to search are the demon lands and the untamed wilderness, and, if I’m going to be perfectly honest, I’m not even sure if they survi~ived.”

“What?!” I shout.

“Miss Okazaki, are you serious?” asks Katia, stunned.

“I’m serious, very serious, *dead* serio~ous. Disaster relief is all about immediate a~action. I’ve done everything I possibly could, e~ever since I was reborn.

Bu~ut, I thought that it would be a big relief if I could find half of you guys when I started, you kno~ow? I managed to drastically exceed that number, so I think my results are gre~eat.”

“But...”

Suddenly, she grabs me by the shoulders. “Okay, are *you* going to try to find them?” she demands, speaking perfectly normally. “*How* are you going to do that? Are you just going to go out and start walking around? You think you’re just going to *find* them like that?”

My hardened heart starts to crumble against her onslaught. Miss Okazaki sees this in my eyes and breathes a deep sigh.

“I know I ju~ust said this, but I really did everything I possibly could. I think what I need to do from now on is try to make sure that the students I *was* able to find can have the ve~ery best life they can in this world. So~o, I’m coming here to study a lot of different things, while also doing some other things on the si~ide, okay?”

“I... understand.”

I still don’t agree with her from the bottom of my heart, but Miss Okazaki really has done her best. Besides, I didn’t do anything at all myself to help with her search, so I don’t think I’m qualified to give my opinion. Most likely, she’s the one with the deepest regrets right now.


“I’m sorry. I kind of just butted in like that.”








“Shun, I never said you were wro~ong. It’s ju~ust, even if you’re not wrong about something, that doesn’t a~lways mean you’re right.”

After that, the matriculation ceremony started. To be honest, I didn’t pay any attention to any of it at all. So, I never noticed the expression on Sue’s face even though she was sitting right next to me, nor the one on Katia’s, even though she

was in the seat next to Sue.

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081Spider vs. Fire Drake (2)

I'm A Spider, So What? – 081

Spider vs. Fire Drake (2)

Caaaaaatfiiiiiiiish~!! How I have been dreaming of this day, catfish!! I've finally found you catfish!! Now, give me your meat! Give it to me now! Your only other option is for me to kill you and take it by force!

I've finally found the catfish I've been searching so hard for! This one's currently swimming in the magma. My first task is to figure out how to lure it out.

By the way, I appraised its skills a little earlier. There's a pretty huge difference in stats between this guy and the dudes from before. The catfish's skills are Fire Drake at level two, Dragon Scales at level one, Aiming at seven, Swimming at six, Overeating at two, and Heat Nullification. The Fire Drake skill at level two is called "Heatclad", which does exactly what the name implies: wraps the user's body in extreme heat. At first, it looked to me like it was a purely defensive skill, but Lady Appraisal informed me that it also increases the user's speed while it's active. However, since this involves heating the user's body up to an extreme degree, it looks like it would actually damage the user if they didn't have a lot of Fire Resistance. These catfish have Heat Nullification, though, so it doesn't matter.

Dragon Scales is a skill that grows special scales all over the user's body. As for how special they are, they not only of course have a high defensive ability but also provide some protection against magic. It doesn't just block it, though, it seems like it actively interferes with the spell's pattern to weaken it. Well, regardless, I can't actually use magic, so I really only have to think of it as really tough scales.

The ones after that are ones that you should already know. Hmm, I just thought of this, though... is this catfish an evolved form of a seahorse? It's got the same

Fire Drake skill, and it does have upgrades of all of the skills that the seahorses had. Compared to a seahorse, a catfish not only has much higher skill levels, but also Dragon Scales and Overeating. Whether I'm looking at the species or the skills, this does seem pretty plausible.

If that's the case, though, then its appearance really must change a ton from evolving, huh... Turning from a seahorse into a catfish, doesn't that seem like a downgrade, biologically speaking? I really don't know the details, though, so I can't say anything for certain, though. The appearance changes so much... ah! If you stretch a seahorse's mouth waaay out and you thicken its body up a ton, that starts to look like a catfish, right? Hmmmmm. Maaaybe.

Well, it really doesn't matter. The only thing that matters to me about a catfish is its meat. So, let's try a first strike: Poison Stone!

My poison-covered rock sails out and hits the catfish on its back. Yep. It didn't take very much damage from that at all. I guess I'm going to do the same thing I did before: use Poison Synthesis to dump a bunch of poison on it when it charges out at me.

As I was thinking that, the freaking catfish used its fireball breath on me from the magma! Seriouslyyy? It's bigger and faster than the seahorse's. Well, even still, it's not like it'll hit me. I dodge to the side with a little hop, and it sails right past me.

Accelerated Thought only allows me to extend time by a little bit, but even so it still feels like the world is moving just a bit more slowly. Thanks to how ridiculously high my speed is, it feels like I can keep moving normally, even when time is slowed down like this. Well, when I get a few more levels in Accelerated Thought, things are going to get slower and slower, so I don't know what things are going to be like then. I think that I'm stretching 1 second into 1.1 seconds, maybe? This isn't an accurate assessment at all since it's just based on my sensations, but I think I'm being pretty accurate here.

The catfish fires off a second shot. This thing is doing exactly the same thing as the seahorses. It really is starting to look like they're related, after all... I guess I just got lucky that the last catfish crawled onto solid ground at the start of the fight. I use the same strategy here as with the seahorses, right? Ah, although, this guy has extra abilities like Heatclad, so I'm probably going to have to change up

my strategy a bit. Maybe the last catfish attacked me on land because I suddenly showed up in front of it, looking like an enemy.

I keep dodging the catfish's fireballs. Its mana is going to run dry soon, but is it really going to come out? When the seahorses run out mana, they just calmly crawl out onto the dry ground, but what's the catfish going to do? It's going to be a real problem for me if it doesn't come up onto land, but based on the last fight I think it might flee if it senses that it's in danger.

I can't let that happen, you know? I'm going to chase you down to the ends of the earth, you know?

I put my concerns aside for now, since the catfish has stopped launching fireballs. Hm? It still has a little bit of mana left, though...? Oh! Now it's ticking down. Did it just turn on Heatclad? Maaan, it's so amazing that I can tell what's happening here. I know every single detail of my opponent. Appraisal really is OP.

The catfish crawls out of the magma, turns toward me, and charges, its wide mouth gaping. Eh heh heh. I've been waiting for this!!


When it's come close enough, I dodge to the side, activating Poison Synthesis as I do so. The catfish's mouth snaps shut on a glob of deadly poison, and it gulps it down. I keep a eye on it, and... oh! It fell over. Aww, it's twitching. My Deadly Spider Poison really is amazingly potent. The regular Strong Poison wouldn't have anywhere near this kind of effect, but Poison Synthesis works amazingly well once I pair it up with my own natural poisons. Seriously, I am super compatible with this skill.











Now then, let's pour a little more poison on this suffering catfish. With a huge, final convulsion, its breathing comes to a ragged halt. Now all I have to do is wait for all of the heat from both the magma and Heatclad to dissipate.

Din-ner~, din-ner~! I've been eating all of the other monsters I've defeated so far out of grim obligation, but this time is different! I'm going to be eating something delicious. Ahh, what a wonderful thing!

Maaan, this isn't going to cool quickly. I'm going to sit here and look forward to finally eating this thing.

[prev](#) • [next](#)

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- [9](#)

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082Spider vs. Fire Drake (3)

I'm A Spider, So What? – 082

Spider vs. Fire Drake (3)

I gladly ate the delicious catfish. It was exquisite. In the middle of my dinner, Enhanced Taste leveled up to seven. I kind of wanted to interject some kind of sarcastic quip about being way too focused on my eating, but I really couldn't help it! I've been eating nothing but disgusting things until now! Wouldn't you want to eat something tasty after all that, too?!

Incidentally, Overeating is now also at level eight. The size of my stock has been more than sufficient for a while now, but since leveling the skill just seems to increase the amount I can store, there's no real downside to it. It's creeping up towards level ten, though, and I want to see what new skill will be derived from it, or maybe what it might even evolve into instead. I've got really high hopes, since the base skill is already so useful. Plus, there's something in specific that I'm kind of curious about.

The thing that's got me thinking is this Pride skill. Pride, of course, is one of the seven deadly sins. Gluttony is another. Overeating and Gluttony both have very similar meanings. Maybe, just maybe, could Overeating wind up evolving into Gluttony? I can't help but wonder about that. Pride is already an excessively amazing skill, so if Overeating really does evolve into Gluttony, and if Gluttony really is part of the same skill tree as Pride, then I'll have another skill that rivals Pride in power.

I'm already worried about what Pride does, though. If I get Gluttony, too, that's another source of anxiety to weigh over me.

Well, it's still level eight, though. It's too early to start worrying. Plus, this is a skill that levels up of its own accord anyway, so even if I was worried about it there's ultimately nothing I can really do about it.

Well then, shall we? It's time to begin hunting for my next catfish.

Caaaaatfiiiiiiish!!

I wander the middle strata, searching for catfish. However, I can't find a single one. Mmmrgh. If they're all lurking down in the magma to start with, of cooourse I won't be able to find them... The first time I saw one of those things, it just kinda popped up out of the magma unexpectedly, huh... If they usually spend all their time swimming around under the magma, then finding them will be really difficult.

Now that I think about it, I'm actually pretty good at noticing enemies around me, even without using any skills. I never really noticed it before, but now that I think back, I can't help but wonder if I have really good intuition. I don't think anyone's ever managed to sneak up on me in either the upper or the lower strata. Right before I would have been attacked, I always feel a twinge of danger shoot through my head. This is just speculation, but I this might be something that spiders have automatically. I think I might be reading the air currents around me and unconsciously reacting to them.

If I think of it like that, then it makes a looot of sense as to why I didn't notice that one catfish until it popped out of the magma right next to me. If I'm reading the air currents, then it's only natural that I wouldn't be able to feel things that are deep in the magma. If a sneak attack were to come from underwater or underground, I don't think I'd be able to detect it at all.

This means that being close to the magma is very dangerous. If something were to suddenly leap up out of the magma and drag me back down with it, my fate would be sealed. Well, even if that's not the case, getting too close to the magma is still pretty dangerous on its own, so I should keep some distance from it regardless. I'm just going to need to be extra vigilant for monsters suddenly popping out of the magma.

Ah, just like this.

A monster leaps out of the magma ahead of me. If I had to describe it in one word, I'd say it's... an eel? Yeah. It's a monstrous eel that's grown arms, legs, and scales.

Elro Generaive — LV 2

Statistics:

HP: 1001/1001 (green)
MP: 511/511 (blue)
SP: 899/899 (yellow), 971/971 (red) +57
Avg. Offense: 893
Avg. Defense: 821
Avg. Magic Power: 454
Avg. Resistance: 433
Avg. Speed: 582

Skills:

[Fire Drake (LV 4)] • [Dragon Scales (LV 5)] •
[Flame Enhancement (LV 1)] • [Aiming (LV 10)] • [Evasion (LV 1)] •
[Probability Compensation (LV 1)] • [High-Speed Swimming (LV 2)] •
[Overeating (LV 5)] • [Heat Nullification] • [Vitality (LV 3)] •
[Alacrity (LV 1)] • [Endurance (LV 3)] • [Strength (LV 1)] •
[Toughness (LV 1)]

Not good. This eel looks *really* strong.

Elro Generaive: *A mid-ranking species of monster, related to the drakes, that inhabits the middle strata of the Great Elro Labyrinth. It is omnivorous, but prefers to devour other monsters.*

Wow, this much strength is mid-ranked? Also, now that I see its skills, are these eels the next evolutionary form of the catfish?

Ah, I don't have the spare time to get curious about that right now. The eel is only about fifteen meters in front of me. It's already spotted me and has locked on target. My speed is still greater than its is, but I am significantly outclassed in every other stat. The most terrifying thing, though, is my entire red stamina bar, plus my Overeating stock, doesn't even come close to its stamina. If I were to try running away, it's very likely that it would just catch up to me immediately once I ran out of stamina. I'd really hope it would give up before that happened, though... My yellow stamina gauge is really short, too, so I can't maintain my top speed for very long at all. The absolute worst case scenario is running my yellow meter dry and *then* getting caught.


Can I actually escape? ...Right as I think that, the eel's figure blurs and splits into two. This is Foresight's effect in action. The blurry reflection of the eel moves as if it's spitting something out. Immediately after that, the eel itself does the exact same thing, launching a fireball right at me. I guess it really does use the same tactics as the seahorses and the catfish, but this guy's fireballs are way bigger and way faster!








I scramble to dodge. The fireball flies at me so quickly that it feels like Accelerated Thought isn't having any effect at all. It slams into the ground where I just was and detonates. Even with Foresight and Accelerated Thought, I was just barely able to dodge. I thought I had a little bit more clearance than that, what gives?

Probability Compensation: *Increases the success rate of skills that are governed by probability.*

Is it because of that skill? It could be increasing the accuracy of those fireballs. If that's the case, then it'll be difficult to keep dodging, even with my Evasion skill. This is really, really bad.

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083Spider vs. Fire Drake (4)

I'm A Spider, So What? – 083

Spider vs. Fire Drake (4)

The eel spits out more fireballs, and I dodge them. As soon as I dodge the first, the second is already flying. I can't even think about running away anymore.

My health ticks down a little as I'm caught at the edge of the explosions. I could dodge them completely if I was moving at maximum speed, but that would drain my yellow meter far too quickly. If I keep going all-out, my yellow meter would hit rock bottom in an instant, leaving me completely out of breath. That, of course, would be the end.

Thanks to Foresight and Accelerated Thought, I can predict where the fireballs are going to land and dodge out of the way early. However, the eel can read my movements as well and adjust its aim before firing. Can either of us outwit the other? My mind strains under the weight as I try to see through its strategies. If one of the eel's fireballs miss me, it's no big deal for the eel. If, however, I fail to dodge just one, I'm dead. There's a huge difference here.

“Proficiency requirements met. Your skill, [Accelerated Thought (LV 1)] has been raised to level 2.”

“Proficiency requirements met. Your skill, [Foresight (LV 1)] has been raised to level 2.”

I am really happy about the timing on these level-ups. The fireballs seem to be moving a little bit more slowly through the air. I need to be careful, though, since this means that my own motions will be a little bit slower, too.

I dodge the fireball. As I do that, I notice through Foresight that the eel's movements are about to change. It's not that different from its fireball breathing motions, but this one is much bigger.

I release the limiters and jump to my maximum speed, dashing away so quickly that it's like I leave the scenery behind. A violent flame obliterates everything behind me.

Flame Breath: *Exhales a wide torrent of roaring flame.*

This is the level four technique of the Fire Drake skill. I'm sure I didn't get hit directly, but even the waste heat is searing my back. Bit by bit, my health is decreasing. The way this situation has rapidly been deteriorating, I'm now in a spot where just a single hit will do me in. And, of course, even if I acknowledge that, I still don't have a strategy to turn this around. I don't have any choice but to keep dodging around like this while looking for a chance to strike back. Watching my life get steadily whittled away, though, is unnerving to the extreme.

Another fireball flies at me. Thanks to the eel's level ten Aiming skill and its Probability Compensation skill, its aim is unbelievably accurate. If I didn't have my Evasion, Accelerated Thought, and Foresight combo, I doubt that I'd be able to dodge any of this at all.

“Proficiency requirements met. Your skill, [Evasion (LV 5)] has been raised to level 6.”

Alright! This isn't going to let me turn things around entirely, but I'll take every little advantage I can get.

Dodging another fireball, I glance up at the eel's remaining mana pool. It's been using a lot of it, but its bar is still more than half full. That Flame Breath was enormous, and it looks like its mana consumption was huge as well. It's good that the eel can't fire that off randomly, but if I can, I'd like to keep things going the way they are right now. Foresight doesn't always activate when I need it, and I'm not at all confident in my ability to dodge if I'm not getting every scrap of information about the eel's movements that I possibly can.

Right as I thought that, Prediction shows the eel going through the motions of Flame Breath again. Once again, I unleash my top speed and blitz past it. The eel, though, doesn't fire in a straight line. It shakes its head from side to side, raining fire to mow down everything in a line! Flame Breath already hits in a wide area, so this is just too freaking huge.

Guh! It grazed me. It only grazed me, and I still lost ten health. One of my hind legs and a small part of my back got caught in the flame. My leg hurts a little bit, but it still moves, so I don't think it'll be a problem. Although... it might be a little bit slower than it was before. Not good.

“Proficiency requirements met. Your skill, [Fire Resistance (LV 1)] has been raised to level 2.”

Finally, Fire Resistance leveled up, after staying stubbornly at level one forever. Amazing timing. If Fire Resistance's level goes up, the amount of environmental damage I'm taking will go down, and Automatic HP Recovery will probably be able to catch up. The recovery rate is probably going to be extremely slow, but I would much rather have a little bit of recovery than nothing at all.

I glance at the eel's mana. Perfect. It's under the halfway point now. It looks like the fireball's mana cost is about 10, and Flame Breath's is about 50. It may be down to half mana, but by my estimates the eel could blast off another four Flame Breaths if it really wanted to. I can't take that.

I start running, trying to put some distance between me and the eel. The eel gives chase, shooting fireballs after me as it swims. Just as planned so far. Like I suspected, it looks like it can't use its Flame Breath while it's moving. Now, if I keep running away like this, and it keeps launching fireballs at me, then it will eventually have to run out of mana at some point. When that happens, then I've got a chance. Probably.

For now, my highest priority is evasion. I'm falling back as far as I can, but my most important job is moving so that I don't get hit. I concentrate on planning out an escape route, picking out paths that won't get me cornered by a pool of magma. A single misstep here could be fatal! I feel like I'm walking on a tightrope.

“Proficiency requirements met. Your skill, [Automatic HP Recovery (LV 5)] has been raised to level 6.”

All right, all right!! I don't know if it's because being in combat is forcing me to concentrate harder, but my skills have been leveling up very quickly. All the skills I've been trying to level up for a while, like Fire Resistance, are going up one by one now.

I am delighted for a split second. However, that split second was fatal.


The eel rears its head back. It's about to breathe fire! This was completely unexpected. Foresight didn't see this coming. I can't dodge this.











Fire blasts forth from the eel's mouth. I immediately kick off from the ground with all of my strength, launching myself as high as I can into the air. The flame sears through my legs as I fly upwards. I push the pain aside and stretch out a strand of silk, sticking it to the ceiling. I frantically pull myself up to it, and land on the ceiling.

“Proficiency requirements met. Your skill, [3-D Maneuvering (LV 4)] has been raised to level 5.”

From the ceiling, I look down at the eel. From the magma, the eel looks back up at me. I somehow managed to dodge the worst of that attack, but, well, what am I going to do from here...?

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084Spider vs. Fire Drake (5)

I'm a Spider, So What? – 084

Spider vs. Fire Drake (5)

It's a good thing that I managed to escape to the ceiling, but I'm not particularly thrilled with the current state of affairs. At the very least, while I'm on the ceiling, I'm way slower than I would be if I were on the ground instead. When I was on the ground, even when I was trying my very, very best, I was barely avoiding the eel's attacks. On the ceiling, I don't think I have any chance at all. If I don't get back down soon, I think I'm going to be sniped to death.

On the other hand, I wouldn't really say that the eel has very much room for error, either. It's burned through a lot of its mana already. If it were to spend all of it, then it could probably get either three Flame Breaths or sixteen fireballs off. Compared to where it was at the start of this whole encounter, it has far fewer options. However, I definitely think that it still has the strength to knock me off of the ceiling.

The real question is whether I'm going to be the one to get myself down, or if the eel's going to do it for me.

I immediately start to move, aiming at the nearest wall. The eel, however, looks like it anticipated this, and has launched a fireball right in my path. Here on the ceiling, dodging is extremely difficult. I don't have time to be concerned about my yellow stamina gauge right now! I use the maximum speed I possibly can, trying to get out of the way of the rapidly approaching fireball.

I don't have much choice but to push through this, leaning on SP Consumption Reduction and Automatic SP Recovery. Before my yellow meter empties out entirely, I have to make it to that wall.

I somehow manage to dodge the fireball. However, thanks to that, I'm not significantly closer to the wall than I was before. And, of course, since I;m

moving so quickly, my yellow meter is going down even further. Not good. If I run out of yellow stamina, continuing to cling to the ceiling is going to start being very difficult. Even still, it's not like I can just stop dodging these fireballs.

And even though I'm keeping all of that in mind, there's no way I can actually advance as I planned, not with this perfect fireball sniping from below. And then, at last, my yellow gauge finally runs out. In an instant, fatigue slams through my entire body. And, mercilessly, another fireball is approaching.

Guh!

There's no way I can defend against this one, so I of course throw myself from the ceiling and into empty air. The fireball detonates right next to me, and the blast gently brushes past my body, sending me into a tailspin. To try to regain any sort of control over my own body, I fling a strand of silk straight out. It sticks to a wall, and I immediately yank myself in. Another fireball sails right through the space where I just was.

I swing down through the air like a pendulum, letting go just barely in time to land on solid ground instead of falling into scorching hot magma. Even here, yet another relentless fireball is flying at me again. I turn my landing velocity into a tumble, rolling out of the way just in time.

This really hurts. My yellow stamina is completely gone, but I still have to keep moving. Crushing exhaustion and agony weigh down my entire body, suffocating me, so bitter I can taste it. I muscle myself past it, though, with the help of Ignore Pain and Pain Tolerance.

Because, of course, the eel is about to spit out another Flame Breath.

I whip my trembling body into motion and run at full speed. The light of the roaring flame stains everything around me a brilliant red. A wave of searing heat rushes toward me from behind, and I keep running, trying to shake it off. Thus, I managed to avoid another Flame Breath.

“Proficiency requirements met. Your skill, [Evasion (LV 6)] has been raised to level 7.”

I have a moment to catch my breath after I dodge the Flame Breath. My yellow stamina meter starts to fill back up.

There aren't any more fireballs coming this way. Finally, the eel has run out of mana. Having lost its long-distance attacks, it glides onto land, finally showing its true appearance.

The only part of it that really looks like an eel is its head. The rest of it looks very much like a Chinese dragon with a very long body. Even though it's exhausted all of its mana, it still has its eyes set firmly on me. For whatever reason, this thing has completely and totally decided that I am its enemy. Maybe at the beginning of all this the eel thought that I was just a nuisance ruining the view, but partway through the fight it felt like it started getting serious about throwing those fireballs. By the time it broke out its Flame Breath, it was *really* serious. Somehow, it's looking like the eel is really unhappy that I managed to dodge all of its attacks.

Even if I try to escape now, I don't think it'll let me get away. After all, even though its mana may be depleted, it still has plenty of stamina. I, on the other hand, have basically zero left. My red meter has depleted itself to the point where I can't ignore it anymore, as payment for the fact that I kept running despite being completely out of yellow stamina. I still have plenty of buffer left from Overeating, so I'm not in any danger of just collapsing immediately, but if I were to get into a raw endurance race with the eel, I would definitely lose.

I can't escape. There's only one real option available: fight it, and win.

If you just compare our raw numerical statistics, there's no way I can compete. However, my stats don't tell the whole story. Even though I understand that fighting isn't a good thing, these skills are probably the most important things you can have in this world.

Honestly, if you just look at my stats, it looks like it's straight-up miraculous how I've been able to survive for so long. This miracle was brought about, of course, by all of my skills. If I use every single one of my skills to their maximum potential, I can overcome my huge statistical disadvantage, and manage to even just barely crawl around in the same arena as this eel. There may be a difference in our statistics, but those numbers aren't absolute. The difference is just small enough that I can make up the rest of it with the judicious application of my skills.

On top of that, I've already seen through every single one of the eel's skills.


Now that its mana is gone, it's only left with three that I really care about: the dream combo of Aiming, Evasion, and Probability Compensation. In addition, I need to keep the raw defensive power of its Dragon Scales in mind. This is the third-level effect of the Fire Drake skill. And, last but not least, I need to be cautious of the raw power of its enormous body.







Even just looking at it, I can tell it's a formidable enemy. I, however, still have my trump card, my most potent weapon: my deadly venom. Against my poison, defensive statistics are worthless. It will land on your tough scales, corrode its way through them, and then assault your body directly, leaving you dead and twitching. In the end, all I can rely on are my skills. The only way I can surpass this thing is if I use my skills. But, however, that means that I actually *can* surpass this.

Neither of us can defend against the other's attacks. If a even single attack manages to hit, one of us is almost certainly going to die. So, the deciding factor in all of this is going to be...

Just like that, round two of my battle against the eel has begun, this time on solid ground.

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085Spider vs. Fire Drake, the Conclusion

I'm A Spider, So What? – 085

Spider vs. Fire Drake, the Conclusion

The eel undulates its long body back and forth. In both its offense and its defense so far, it's been very cautious of me. This eel definitely seems more intelligent than some of the other monsters I've fought, although it might not be as smart as the monkeys. That alone makes things that much harder for me.

“Proficiency requirements met. Your skill, [Accelerated Thought (LV 2)] has been raised to level 3.” “Proficiency requirements met. Your skill, [Foresight (LV 2)] has been raised to level 3.”

As soon as the so-called “Voice of Heaven” starts to speak, the eel leaps into action. It whips its entire body around, and its tail lashes out at me. I dodge, of course, but the eel isn't finished attacking. It swings its tail back around, sweeping horizontally along the ground at me like a scythe. I jump backwards, dodging once again. It pulls its tail back, flipping itself around, and charges toward me headfirst.

This is exactly the moment I was waiting for.

In the slightly leisurely world of Accelerated Thought, I gaze at eel's gaping mouth as it draws close. Right when I judge that I'd only be barely able to dodge, I activate Poison Synthesis. Then, I jump away.

It's the exact same strategy I used against the catfish, but its effect is still massive. Just as I planned, the glob of deadly poison lands right in the eel's mouth.

The eel thrashes around violently, in extreme pain as its health quickly evaporates. I scurry back, out of harm's way.

At the end of the day, if both opponents have enough offensive power to eliminate each other in a single blow, then whoever lands that first blow wins. The question then becomes one of making your attack actually hit, so it is ultimately the opponent with the best tactics that will win the fight. On top of that, my evasive abilities are greater than its accuracy. That eel may have Aiming at level ten and a Probability Compensation skill, but it's no match for my Evasion, Accelerated Thought, and Foresight combo. So, now that I've dragged it up onto solid ground with me, my chances for success are suddenly much, much higher.

It's not over yet, though. I was talking about one hit knockouts, but this eel isn't going to die from just one glob of poison. I didn't kill the catfish with just one shot, so there's no way that this higher-ranked eel will die from just that, either. Also, the eel still has one more ability to rely on.

Before my eyes, the eel's health meter starts to rapidly refill.

Life Conversion: *Convert's the user's stamina points into health points.*

This is the level three ability of the Fire Drake skill. It consumes stamina to restore the same amount of health. It may not have enough stamina available to heal itself entirely, but it can give itself enough health to endure the worst of my poison. Even worse, as I'm looking at its Appraisal result, I see two new skills appear: Poison Resistance and Automatic HP Recovery, both at level one. The poison, though, still burns through its system. Even if the damage is already past its peak, it's still shaving off health, bit by bit.

Well, it's not like I'm just quietly sitting there and watching as the eel as it peacefully revives itself.

I run around the eel wrapping it in the thickest, strongest silk I can produce. I'm pretty sure it's going to burn through this in an instant, but that doesn't matter. If I can hold it still, one instant is all I need.

Exactly as I was hoping, I manage to hold it still for just one moment. In that moment, I aim at the eel and activate Poison Synthesis as quickly as I possibly can. Countless blobs of poison rain down on the eel's face, splashing all over it.

The eel flails wildly, tearing through my threads. My poison has made it in through its mouth and its eyes, and it burns away at its health. It moves too

quickly for that brand new Automatic HP Regeneration to regenerate. It burns too strongly for that brand new Poison Resistance to resist. I have spent my entire life as a spider honing these weapons! A hastily-constructed shield like that has no chance of stopping me!

The eel has long since burned through all of its stamina to heal itself, and it has nothing left with which to resist this attack.

“Experience requirements met. Small Poison Taratekt, you have grown from level 7 to level 8. Every ability score has been increased. Acquired bonus skill proficiencies from leveling up: your skill [Multitasking (LV 4)] has been raised to level 5 and your skill [Accelerated SP Recovery (LV 2)] has been raised to level 3. You have acquired additional skill points.”

“Experience requirements met. Small Poison Taratekt, you have grown from level 8 to level 9. Every ability score has been increased. Acquired bonus skill proficiencies from leveling up: your skill [Alacrity (LV 8)] has been raised to level 9 and your skill [Endurance (LV 8)] has been raised to level 9. You have acquired additional skill points.”

“Experience requirements met. Small Poison Taratekt, you have grown from level 9 to level 10. Every ability score has been increased. Acquired bonus skill proficiencies from leveling up: your skill [Computation (LV 6)] has been raised to level 7, your skill [Enhanced Vision (LV 8)] has been raised to level 9, and your skill [Vitality (LV 8)] has been raised to level 9. You have acquired additional skill points.”


“Level requirement met. Small Poison Taratekt, you are eligible for evolution.”









Victory!! Part three: complete!¹

Translator’s notes for this chapter:

1. I actually don’t know what parts one and two are.

[prev](#) • [next](#)

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S13The Saint and the Sword Emperor

I'm A Spider, So What? – S13

The Saint and the Sword Emperor

The entrance ceremony went off without a hitch. After that, everyone started wandering off. Most of the students went to their new assigned dormitories, while many others left to explore the campus. This academy is a boarding school. All students must live in the dormitories, and I'm no exception. Unless there's a very good reason, students don't leave the school grounds except for long vacations.

"What shall we do after this?" asks Katia, talking in princess mode. We're already in the middle of getting our dormitories prepared. If possible, though, I'd still like to go explore the campus after this.

"There's some people I want to go me~et!" says Miss Okazaki. "Do any of you want to come wi~ith me?"

"There's people you'd like to meet?" I ask.

"Corre~ect! I want to go meet the future Sa~aint and the future Sword Empero~or. No reason for you not to come alo~ong!"

The Saint¹ and the Sword Emperor. The Saint is the holy symbol of the Holy Country of Aleius. The position is appointed by the state itself, and is often described as a counterpart to the Hero himself. She is obligated to go with the Hero when he goes out on a mission. Right now, my older brother Julius is likely out somewhere with the current Saint.

The Sword Emperor is the emperor of the largest country on the continent of Daztordia, the Rengzant Empire. Rengzant is a country right on the edge of the demon's lands, so it is constantly plagued by battle. The foremost requirement to become the emperor of that country is strength. Because of that, each Emperor bears the same title that the first Emperor of Rengzant did: Sword Emperor.

Where the Saint is selected from a pool of talented candidates, the Sword Emperor is chosen by bloodline. In other words, I guess, the boy now attending this academy is the current Sword Emperor's son.

"Aah, the crown prince of the Rengzant Empire! I have heard rumors about that man. It would certainly seem that he is attending this academy this year, just as we are. They say that his skill with a sword is unparalleled, rivaling even that of the first Sword Emperor."

Eh? How does Katia know that? This is the first I'm hearing about any of this!

"Shun, you should learn more of the ways of the world," says Katia, amazed. She might have seen something in my expression. Grr, I can't deny it, though.

"Miss Okazaki," she says, "why are you so intent on meeting them personally? Is it the matter we were discussing earlier?"

"Ye~ep! It's that thing!"

"Well, then I absolutely mustn't miss this."

Somehow, the conversation continues just between the two of them. Sue and I exchange glances, feeling completely left behind.

"Now, Shun, let us be off... hm? Why are you making that face?"

"Um, I didn't really follow what you were saying..."

"I'd understand Sue saying that, but why are you..."

Katia and Miss Okazaki both give me very disappointed looks. Th... there's no need to put on faces like that, right?

"Ah! It looks like we don't need to head out after a~all!"

I look over to where Miss Okazaki is pointing and see a boy and girl coming toward us. The boy has brown hair so dark it's almost black and eyes of the same color. His demeanor is sharp and fearless. The girl has wavy blond hair and bright blue eyes, and has a mysterious loveliness about her.

"Hey! This tiny elf kid, this Oka?"

"Natsume! Don't be rude to your teacher! It's nice to see you again, Miss Okazaki."

These two are speaking *in Japanese*! I suddenly understand what Katia and Miss Okazaki were just talking about. These two are reincarnated people, just like us.

“Nice to see you to~oo! Natsume, Hasebe, I’m so~o glad to see you two are doing well.”

I recognize who these two are as soon as she says their names. The boy was formerly known as Natsume Kengo, the center of attention amongst the boys in the class. (I didn’t particularly like him very much.) He was strong and had good reflexes, and while he never was actually violent, his strength was kind of intimidating and drew him a lot of attention. Since he also had a powerful, domineering personality, there were a lot of students who supported him, and a lot who opposed him. I was one of the latter. Well, I was technically on the opposing side, but I really just didn’t go near him.

“Ahaha! Oka, you were already tiny to begin with, and you shrunk even more! Friggin’ hilarious!”

“Natsume!!”

The girl who scolds Natsume was formerly known as Hasebe Yuika. Unlike Natsume, Hasebe was a girl who was really neither good nor bad. She was the kind of person who tended to go with the flow, but I can’t think of anything in particular that would make her stand out as a candidate for being the Saint.

“I’m an elf, I can’t help being tiny~y! Also~o, you’re not that much taller than I am right no~ow!”

“That’s okay, ‘cause I’m only going to get bigger from here. Oh hey, that guy over there, that’s the prince here, right? Who’s that inside him?”

Natsume turns his attention to me. He looks at me like a lion looks at its prey, his eyes shining with fierce intensity. It feels like he’s about to pounce. I thought this guy was kind of nasty in his past life, but did he really use to have such dangerous eyes?

“I’m Yamada Shunsuke,” I reply, tersely.

“And I’m Ooshima Kanata. Long time no see.”

Katia steps forward, forcefully attracting attention to herself.

“Eh? Ooshima?” asks Hasebe, taking the bait. “Yep! I’m Ooshima. Surprised? I

got reborn as a woman when I got reincarnated.”


Katia’s introduction brought the conversation all to herself, and Natsume’s attention drifted away from me. Thank you, Katia.








Even still, I’m going to need to be very careful of Natsume, whose new name is Hugo Von Regzand.

Translator’s notes for this chapter:

1. The word here is specifically , which is explicitly feminine.

[prev](#) • [next](#)

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086Victory Dance

I'm A Spider, So What? – 086

Victory Dance

“You have a choice in evolutionary forms. Please choose between [Poison Taratekt] and [Zoa Ere].”

Ahh, evolution, huh... Wait, evolution!? That was fast!! I thought it happened quickly back when I fought those monkeys, but this time is super quick too?!

Well, I can save evolving for later. Now is the time for savoring the taste of victory.

I woooooon!!!

Ya~hoo!

I beat it! I beat it! I fought against that ridiculously strong eel, and I beat it!

I'm freaking amazing, right?! I'm super strong, right?!

Heh. Heh heh. I didn't even really get to use my thread! I fought that thing straight on, head to head, and I kicked its butt!! You don't get to call me weak a-ny-more! I'm pooooowerful!! Woohoooo!!

That eel was a formidable opponent. It was *very much* a formidable opponent.

That was a struggle to the death. But the victor? Me. Numero freaking Uno, right here. Eheehehehe.

Ah! Not good. I'm still super excited. Hehehe. Because, you know, that was a freaking *drake*! And not a drake-in-name-only like those catfish and seahorses, but a real, honest-to-god, drake-like drake! And who was it beat that thing in a one-on-one, fair and square, face-to-face cage match?!

ME!!

Aaaah!! I'm getting way too pumped again! Wa... HOOOO!!

We are experiencing technical difficulties. Please stand by.

Inhaaaaale, exhaaaaale. I got so excited that I ran out of breath. Whooooof. Now then, let's put all that excitement aside, and figure out what I'm going to be doing next, hm?

First off, I leveled up a bunch all at once. As expected of that eel. Its drake classification was not just for show. Its stats were overwhelmingly more powerful than mine, so between that and Pride's experience bonus, I leveled up quite a bit in one shot. My skills also went up quite a bit in the middle of that fight, so all in all this was a really tasty encounter, experience point-wise.

To be perfectly honest, though, that fight was probably determined entirely by luck. In reality, if a single foot was even the slightest bit out of place, I'd be cinders right now, wafting through the breeze. That's how strong that eel was. I mean, if you just take a look at its raw stats, there's no way you could say that I had any shot of winning. It was like that when I fought those monkeys too! I'm winning way too many fights by the skin of my teeth.

The two skills I'm most happy about raising are Automatic HP Recovery and Fire Resistance. Before, my regeneration rate was just barely able to keep up with the constant environmental damage I was taking from the heat. Now that my resistance is higher and my regeneration is faster, I think I might be able to start slowly regenerating my lost health. I can't test it right now, though, since leveling up fully healed me. Well, that still doesn't change the fact that I'm almost assuredly still going to die in a single hit.

So. I hit level ten. And, since I hit level ten, I get the chance to evolve. But, what should I do? Is it really safe for me to evolve in a place like this?

After all, evolving carries with it a suitable amount of peril: while I'm in the middle of evolving, I am completely and utterly unconscious. I'd be completely and utterly defenseless if another monster came and attacked me! Last time, and the time before that, I made sure to guarantee my own safety first. This time, I can't do that, because, y'know, I can't use my silk. If I were to build a nest in the middle of all this scorching magma, it would absolutely just catch fire as I tried to make it. Could I evolve while surrounded in flames, you ask? Absolutely impossible.

It's not just that. Evolving itself takes a ton of energy to happen, which

massively depletes my mana and stamina. The worst case there is starving to death afterwards. I've had tons of food stockpiled in advance for all of my other evolutions, so I was able to gorge myself immediately afterward. I have no such stockpile here. Well, I *do* have this eel, but I don't think that it'll actually fill my stamina all the way back up, as enormous as it may be. I wouldn't have to worry about immediately starving to death, but I'd be stuck hunting for prey for a while afterwards.

Ah, although, what would happen to my Overeating stock? I didn't really have anything in my stockpile the last few times I evolved, huh... Some of it got drained away while I was fighting the eel, but even so I still have a ton of it. If I can use the energy from my stockpile for evolving, then maybe it won't actually be completely empty when it's all over... hmmmnn. I really shouldn't act based just on wishful thinking, though, right?

On a purely emotional level, I really want to evolve right now, but if I make myself think about things like safety, it really is looking like I should just hold off on it for now, huh...? I've thought about this before, but I'm really worried about whether or not I'll still keep leveling up after I hit ten. Maybe "small"-type monsters just max out at level ten? If that's the case, then I'd just be literally throwing away experience points, since I'm still going to have to continue grinding through the middle strata. And there's nooo way I'm going to let that happen. So, maybe I really should try to evolve now, huh?

Hmmmm. Well, for now, I might as well Appraise both of the choices I have for evolution. If you would, please, Milady?

Available evolutionary forms: Poison Taratekt, Zoa Ere


Hm? Poison Taratekt is fine, whatever, but what's this Zoa Ere thing? It's not a Taratekt anymore...?








Zoa Ere: Evolutionary conditions – Small spider-type monster with statistics above a certain level; Assassin title. Description – A small spider-type monster, feared as a symbol of ill fortune. Possesses both great combat strength and stealth.

Ohh, Lady Appraisal! You've added the evolutionary conditions to your results, have you not? Your greatness continues to amaze, Milady. You leave no stone unturned!

Hmmf. In other words, since my stats are above a certain threshold, this particular evolution is possible. I probably couldn't pick this evolution before now because my stats were too low. Also, I guess this means that some evolutions are linked to titles, huh. Maybe I could evolve into a Poison-type because I had the Poison User title? That seems pretty reasonable...

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087I'm evolving!!! (part 3)

I'm A Spider, So What? – 087

I'm evolving!!! (part 3)

Poison Taratekt: *Evolutionary conditions – Level 10 Small Poison Taratekt. Description – An adult specimen of a rare subspecies of the species of spider monsters known as the Taratekt. It carries an extremely powerful poison.*

I Appraise my Poison Taratekt option, just to be sure. However, if I'm going to evolve, it's definitely going to be the other choice: Zoa Ere. Not only are the requirements to evolve into it very harsh, but according to the Lady Appraisal it has great combat strength. Bonus points: it's still small.

Based on its name and its description, a Zoa Ere seems like an entirely different species than a Taratekt. Should I be nervous about that? If I stay a Taratekt, I know for sure that I'm going to become strong. After all, I've already seen what an evolved Taratekt looks like with my very own eyes: my mother, a super-giant, monstrous spider. There's the Greater Taratekts that I saw in the lower strata as well. I'm so weak that it's not something I can properly imagine, but if I keep evolving along this line I know I'll keep crawling towards that kind of power.

I understand that, but if I do turn into a Poison Taratekt, I'll get bigger, won't I... They say it's better to be too big than too small, but really, cutting-edge technology is all about miniaturization, about packing a lot of power into a tiny package. That is my ultimate goal! At least, that's my official position. Truthfully, I'm pretty concerned that getting big is going to make it difficult for me to actually move around. How much space does my mother actually need to move around like she wants? All the passages I've been able to cross through without any trouble at all may suddenly become too small for me to fit through.

And while we're at it, making myself bigger in these magma-covered middle strata? I can't help but imagine what would happen if I miss my footing on one of these narrow paths! It's not like I'd just splash into a pond, this is magma we're talking about! I'd die! I have zero clue as to how much bigger an adult Taratekt gets, so from where I'm standing there are far, far more minuses than pluses here.

I'm not just worried about not being able to fit down a passage. I'm worried that

combat would get harder, too! After all, I'm specced for evasion. If I'm bigger, that means I'm a bigger target, and an evasion-spec really works better if you're already hard to hit. On top of that, if I get bigger, I'm going to get heavier, which means I'm going to get slower, and speed is my strongest suit, right? No. Way.

So, yeah, there's no way I'd want to evolve into a Taratekt. Since I've got a choice to evolve into a different species, I think I want to go with that instead.

It's not like I don't have my concerns, though. I know that a Taratekt can wind up getting pretty strong, but I don't know for sure that a Zoa Ere could as well. Worse, Zoa Ere could be a dead-end in the evolutionary tree. If that's the case, then maximizing my strength as a Taratekt might be a better ideal overall.

Wellllll, I can't really help it if worst comes to worst. Stats are always boosted by level-ups, and you can train them up the hard way, too. Even the weakest of monsters can become really strong if you raise them with loving care. Like me. Yeah, seriously, if you compare me right now to how weak I was when I started out, I'm way stronger. I already know what it's like to be so weak that I can die in a single hit, so I think that there's a lot of adversity out there that I can overcome.

I'll evolve into a Zoa Ere.

The problem is still how I'm going to find a way to do so safely, but I've got one idea so far. I'm not actually sure if you could call it safe or risky, but I think it's better than nothing. My solution is, probably, the eel's corpse!!

Welcome to today's three minute arrangement. The item we shall be preparing is the corpse of an eel. It is a material of the highest quality. First, we fully lay out the eel, so that it is straight. Next, we begin to roll the eel, starting from its tail. It is important at this stage to ensure that it is coiled neatly. While doing so, we leave a space at the center of the coil. Once the outline of the circle has been established, we then begin coiling the eel vertically, placing each turn successively higher atop the body. Now, at this point, we climb inside the coil to continue our work. After the final turns of the coil have been arranged, we place the head of the eel across the center, finishing our arrangement.

With this, our eel shelter is complete. Ahh, this looks great!

Alright! The eel's Dragon Scales are very tough. It'll be difficult to cut through,

so I'm pretty confident it'll hold up, even though it's not as good as a real nest. I shouldn't have any trouble evolving in here... probably.

I'm about as ready as I'll ever be.


“Small Poison Taratekt, you are now evolving into a Zoa Ere.”










Yep!

Like a candle being blown out, my consciousness disappears.

***“Evolution has completed. You have become a Zoa Ere. Every ability score has been increased. Acquired bonus skill proficiencies from evolving: your skill [Accelerated MP Recovery (LV 3)] has been raised to level 4, your skill [Damage Enhancement (LV 1)] has been raised to level 2, your skill [Slashing Enhancement (LV 1)] has been raised to level 2, your skill [Poison Enhancement (LV 3)] has been raised to level 4, your skill [Battle Spirit (LV 1)] has been raised to level 2, your skill [Poison Synthesis (LV 7)] has been raised to level 8, and your skill [Spider Thread (LV 9)] has been raised to level 10. Your [Spider Thread (LV 10)] skill has reached its maximum level and has evolved into a new skill, [All-Purpose Silk (LV 1)]. Your existing skill, [Severing Thread (LV 6)], has been integrated with your new skill, [All-Purpose Silk (LV 1)]. Furthermore, your skill [Shadow Magic (LV 2)] has been increased to level 3, your skill [Poison Magic (LV 2)] has been raised to level 3, your skill [Damage Resistance (LV 1)] has been raised to level 2, your skill Paralysis Resistance (LV 3) has been raised to level 4, your skill [Fainting Resistance (LV 2)] has been raised to level 3, your skill [Enhanced Touch (LV 6)] has been raised to level 7, your skill [Greater Strength (LV 3)] has been raised to level 4, your skill [Greater Toughness (LV 3)] has been raised to level 4, your skill [Resistance (LV 3)] has been raised to level 4, and your skill [Taboo (LV 4)] has been raised to level 5. From evolving, you have acquired the new skills [Decaying Attack (LV 1)] and [Slashing Enhancement (LV 1)]. Your new skill, [Slashing Enhancement (LV 1)] has been integrated with your existing skill, [Slashing Enhancement (LV 2)]. Furthermore, from evolving, you have acquired the new skill [Stealth (LV 1)]. Your new skill, [Stealth (LV 1)], has been integrated with your existing skill, [Stealth (LV 7)]. Furthermore, from evolving, you have acquired the new skill [Silence (LV 1)]. You have acquired additional skill points.”

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088Zoa Ere

I'm A Spider, So What? – 088

Zoa Ere

Good morning. Well, I don't know if it actually is morning. I've woken up safely once again. I'm so relieved... This is probably the most dangerous evolution I've had so far. Something could have sent me off to Heaven and there's no waaay I would have noticed...

Huh? You're saying I'd go to Hell, not Heaven? As if someone as upstanding and forthright as myself would ever be condemned to Hell!

Well then, what I'd really like to be doing now is my usual routine of checking my Appraisal results, but right now I need to make sure I really am still safe. My eel-based emergency shelter seems to have held up, but it's possible that monsters could be closing in on me from all sides. So, let's slooowly peek up...

Good. Nothing really out there. Alright, alright, now then, let's pull up my Appraisal window and start eating this... ah, wait, can't do that. I've got to peel off all of these scales first, like I had to do with that snake, otherwise there's no way I can eat it... *Shit*. Ugh, oh well, no choice. I don't feel like I'm too hungry to move right now, so maybe Overeating did its job well? I guess I'll scale this eel while I'm checking my stats, then...

Zoa Ere — LV 1 — (no name)

Statistics:

HP: 195/195 (green)

MP: 1/291 (blue)

SP: 195/195 (yellow), 195/195 (red) +43

Avg. Offense: 251

Avg. Defense: 251

Avg. Magic Power: 245

Avg. Resistance: 280

Avg. Speed: 1272

Skills:

[Automatic HP Recovery (LV 6)] •
[Accelerated MP Recovery (LV 4)] •
[MP Consumption Reduction (LV 3)] •
[Accelerated SP Recovery (LV 3)] •
[SP Consumption Reduction (LV 3)] •
[Damage Enhancement (LV 2)] • [Slashing Enhancement (LV 2)] •
[Poison Enhancement (LV 4)] • [Battle Spirit (LV 2)] •
[Willpower Allocation (LV 2)] • [Greater Poison Attack (LV 3)] •
[Decaying Attack (LV 1)] • [Poison Synthesis (LV 8)] •
[Thread Talent (LV 3)] • [All-Purpose Silk (LV 1)] •
[Thread Manipulation (LV 8)] • [Throwing (LV 7)] • [3-D Maneuvering (LV 5)] • [Concentration (LV 10)] •
[Accelerated Thought (LV 3)] • [Foresight (LV 3)] •
[Multitasking (LV 5)] • [Computation (LV 7)] • [Aiming (LV 8)] •
[Evasion (LV 7)] • [Appraisal (LV 9)] • [Detection (LV 6)] •
[Stealth (LV 7)] • [Silence (LV 1)] • [Hell] •
[Corruption Magic (LV 3)] • [Shadow Magic (LV 3)] •
[Poison Magic (LV 3)] • [Abyssal Magic (LV 10)] • [Pride] •
[Overeating (LV 8)] • [Night Vision (LV 10)] •
[Visible Spectrum Expansion (LV 2)] • [Damage Resistance (LV 2)] •
[Bashing Resistance (LV 2)] • [Slashing Resistance (LV 3)] •
[Fire Resistance (LV 2)] • [Greater Poison Resistance (LV 2)] •
[Paralysis Resistance (LV 4)] • [Petrification Resistance (LV 3)] •
[Acid Resistance (LV 4)] • [Decay Resistance (LV 3)] •
[Fainting Resistance (LV 3)] • [Fear Resistance (LV 7)] •
[Corruption Resistance (LV 3)] • [Ignore Pain] •
[Pain Tolerance (LV 7)] • [Enhanced Vision (LV 9)] •
[Enhanced Hearing (LV 8)] • [Enhanced Smell (LV 7)] •
[Enhanced Taste (LV 7)] • [Enhanced Touch (LV 7)] •
[Vitality (LV 9)] • [Mana Pool (LV 8)] • [Alacrity (LV 9)] •
[Endurance (LV 9)] • [Greater Strength (LV 4)] •
[Greater Toughness (LV 4)] • [Resistance (LV 4)] •
[Kartikaya (LV 3)] • [Taboo (LV 5)] • []

Skill points available: 500

Titles:

[Filth Eater] • [Kin Eater] • [Assassin] • [Monster Slayer] •
[Poison User] • [Silk User] • [Merciless] • [Monster Slaughterer] •
[Lord of Pride]

Huh? Uhh... wait a sec. Let's take another look at that. My eyes might have deceived me. Let's just double-check those numbers real... quick...

Eh? Ehh?! EHHHHHHHHHHH?!

Wh... huh? Eh? That's an *enormous* increase. Isn't that a seriously *enormous* increase?!

Is this for real? Can it really go up by that much? Oh. Is this what it meant by "great combat strength"...?

Wait, this is okay, right? It's okay if I got this strong all at once, right? It's okay, since I got this strong, for me to get kinda carried away now, right? It's okay right? It's got to be okay right?

Heh. Heh heh heh. MY TIME HAS FINALLY COOOME!!

In a single blow, I have blasted through the bottleneck that was my terrible stats! Sure, they're not anywhere as high as this eel's was, but if any of the small fry from around here try to shove me around, I'm strong enough that I won't die anymore! Heh, heh heh heh. Heheheheeheeheeee!

My skill levels also went up a ton. I've got a goood feeling about this. Wait, Taboo went up too? It's at level five?! You mean it's already halfway to max level?! If my theory's right, *something's* going to happen when that skill makes it to level ten. Not good. Well, it's only halfway, still. I'm in the clear, still, probably.

Next, it looks like I've got a bunch more skills I haven't seen before. "Decaying Attack"... seriously? Do you mean *that* Decay? That one attribute that was even worse than what I had imagined it being, once I finally Appraised it? That Decay, right? I can use that now, huuuh... Man, I'm freaking amazing.

Silence is another skill I don't think I've seen before... I'm pretty sure I know what this does, but it doesn't hurt to verify, right?

Silence: *Dampens the sounds the user produces.*

Yep, just like I thought. All right! Ninja level: up! I wonder, am I going to be able to pull off an actual ambush, now?

Next is a skill that I am *extremely* curious about. Spider Silk and Severing Thread have both disappeared, and All-Purpose Silk has appeared in their place. This is probably the evolved form of Spider Silk, but what happened to Severing Thread?

All-Purpose Silk: *Produces customizable silk threads. Attributes: Adhesion, elasticity, resilience, texture, strength, size, imbued attribute (slash, bash, impact), imbued resistance*

It looks like what I get from this over ordinary Spider Silk is the ability to imbue attributes and resistances into my silk. It looks like maybe “slash” is the same slashing that I've been using with Severing Thread, “bash” is probably the bashing attribute, and “impact” is probably some kind of ballistic attribute. Bashing is probably using it like an ordinary whip. Impact feels like I can make my thread explode out with a kind of shockwave. Anything that it impacts would probably take a ton of damage. Whoa, if this wasn't the middle layer, this would be *ridiculously* useful! Man, I've got to get out of here fast so that I can try this out!

As I was confirming all of my stats, I finally finished scaling this eel. Right, let's actually dig into this thing.

...Delicious. Its flavor is subtly different than the catfish. I have to say it again: delicious.


This time, evolving didn't completely drain my stamina. Instead, my Overeating stock got massively depleted. That alone is proof that Overeating does excellent work in this case. It looks like I don't actually need to keep a stockpile of food around me when I evolve, then, since I can just eat it all in advance and keep it in my internal stock. So, what I guess I need to do here is just keep eating and eating until I can fill up my stock completely. If I had to guess based on my previous numbers, I'd say that my stock can probably contain an amount that's









about one hundred times my skill level, so I can fit eight hundred points of backup stamina in there right now.

“Proficiency requirements met. Your skill, [Overeating (LV 8)] has been raised to level 9.”

As soon as I think that, Overeating leveled up. I guess I can fit even more in there now.

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089 Changing and Evolving

I'm A Spider, So What? – 089

Changing and Evolving

Speaking of changes, my skill point total really rocketed up. I thought I was only getting twenty points per level, but I think I got 280 since the last time I checked. If I got sixty from the three levels I got after killing the eel, where did the remaining 220 come from? Is that my bonus for evolving? If that's the case, then I guess my previous calculations were incorrect.

Well, I got them, and it's best not to look a gift horse in the mouth, after all. I've got five hundred points! I wonder what kinds of awesome skills I can find in the tree now? I'm definitely going to have to take a close look at this list later.

Right now, there's something that I'm far more interested in. While I was peeling the eel, I noticed that there's a few things about my body that have changed.

The sharp points of my two forelegs have grown, turning into slender, wicked sickles. These things are amazingly sharp, perfect for slicing. Peeling all of the scales off of that snake took forever, but this time, scaling the eel was lightning fast by comparison. There were far too many scales to count, but I was able to cleanly slice both skin and scale straight off. Now, is that because these sickles are super sharp, or because my offense stat went up?

On top of that, my body is now black. It was kind of dark before¹, but now it's jet black, a black so deep that light barely reflects off it at all. It's blacker than night, blacker than pitch!

I don't have a mirror so I can't check my whole body for changes, but I don't think there's any other major change, is there? My size certainly doesn't seem to have changed. It seems, though, like there's probably a lot of minor changes that I might not even be aware of.

When I was evolving along the Taratekt tree, not a whole lot was changing about my appearance at all. This time, though, I evolved into an entirely different species. If I were to compare before and after side by side, I bet there'd be a lot of differences. It really kind of sucks that I don't have a mirror right now. There's no way for me to get a good look at my own appearance.

Well, at the very least, nothing feels particularly strange or out of place when I'm moving around. It looks like none of my major parts have changed around very much, and I can move around basically exactly as I'm used to. Funnily enough, I never really thought about body parts changing around during my previous evolutions, huh... I breathe a sigh of relief, glad that nothing's changed.

These sickles, though, now *these* are a big change, huh. Somehow, I feel like they should make a "shing!" kind of noise when I get ready to use them. Plus, these sickles really give off a vibe that makes me think of Death's scythe. Well, the species description did say that a Zoa Ere is a symbol of ill fortune, and between my sickles and my Decaying Attacks, I guess I fit that description preeetty well. My mental image of myself is still very much a ninja, but now I feel kinda like a ninja of death.

Let's take a look at the other skills that leveled up. Greater Strength and Toughness both went up again, which means more bonus stats on level-up, which makes me very happy. I may have gotten way stronger, but I'm still absolutely puny next to that eel.

Looks like Poison Synthesis, Poison Magic, and Shadow Magic also went up. I still have no idea how to use magic so I don't really care about the other two, but let's check to see what new goodies Poison Synthesis has for me.

Imbue Paralysis Attribute: *Applies the Paralysis attribute to the created poison.*

Wat.

S... s-s-s... seriously?! Did... did I just get something absolutely ridiculous? Poison Synthesis was already the most useful skill in my entire set down here in the middle layer, and now it's gotten even better!! Whoa. I *have* to try this out immediately.

Just like that, I immediately try adding a paralytic component to my Deadly

Spider Venom. I'm going to have to wait to figure out what sort of effects it will actually have until my next actual encounter. ...Hm, although, my Deadly Spider Venom is, y'know, *deadly*, so I don't think I'd be able to see the paralysis set in before my target instantly dies. Maybe if I add Paralysis to my Weak Poison... yeah, this'll work. Next monster I see, I'm going to give them a little taste of this paralytic-imbued Weak Poison, and see what happens. Ahh, man, I'm *waaay* looking forward to this...

Ah, might as well take a look at the extra spells I got for Poison and/or Shadow Magic, huh. Couldn't hurt, right?

Poison Shield: *Temporarily increases the target's poison resistance.*

Hmmm. A spell that boosts my own poison resistance, huh... That's compleeetely worthless. Seriously, wouldn't someone who uses a lot of poison already have really good poison resistance? Is there any actual point to Poison Magic even *existing* at all? Either way, it's not like I can actually use it.

Ah, wait a sec. Is this maybe something that I can use on an ally? If I cast this on all of my allies, then we'd have a pretty big advantage against a poison-wielding enemy. Ahhh! I've always been alone down here, so I never even considered anything like that. It looks like this is a spell that's actually useful under normal circumstances. Depending on the opponent, this could be a serious trump card. I see, I see... Well, it's not like I actually care either way!

...Huh? Hold on, wait a sec. Is it really impossible for me to use any magic?

I just got a bunch of ranks in both Multitasking and Computation. Isn't it about time that I actually start being able to use Detection?Well, it's been a while, why don't we give it a shot?

Inhaaaale... exhaaaale. Right!

Detection: *ON!*

Guh!

Grrrrrngh!

Agh!

“Proficiency requirements met. Your skill, [Calculation (LV 7)] has been

raised to level 8.”

“Proficiency requirements met. Your skill, [Multitasking (LV 5)] has been raised to level 6.”

“Proficiency requirements met. Your skill, [Detection (LV 6)] has been raised to level 7.”

“Proficiency requirements met. Your skill, [Corruption Resistance (LV 3)] has been raised to level 4.”


OFF!!










Whoof... That suuuucked... But, I think I was able to keep it on for little bit more this time. It still took everything I had to keep it on for as long as I did, but it's still a step forward. The pattern is unmistakable. I still haven't mastered it yet, but I can definitely see the light at the end of the tunnel!

Translator's notes for this chapter:

1. This isn't a mistranslation. The light novel illustrations show her as a whitish-pink, but in the web novel she's black. I haven't read the LN, so I don't know if they changed it in the actual text or if the artist is taking liberties here.

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090Patience

I'm A Spider, So What? – 090

Patience

I stroll leisurely through the middle strata. My belly is full of eel, so I no longer need to be worried about spontaneously fainting from hunger. I really don't need to be actively hunting anything down right now, so I'm just kind of exploring at my own pace. I'm in a pretty good mood, so I can almost put aside how stupidly hot it is down here. ...Almost.

I can't see a single monster nearby, so I think I'm about ready to finally take a look at that skill list. Evolving this time got me all the way up to five hundred points in a single go, so I'm positive that I can find a really cool skill in this list if I look hard. All of the skills I've bought have really been pulling their weight (well, except for Detection), so if this streak continues I'm bound to find something awesome in here.

Pride doesn't seem like it's really had any negative effects, other than giving me an extra rank of Taboo. And Taboo doesn't seem like it's doing anything to me right now, so it's really not that much of a negative, is it? Pride has given me so many ridiculous bonuses that it really looks like the positives vastly outweigh that single negative. I have zero idea as to why it only cost me one hundred skill points. With effects like that, I could absolutely see it costing an entire thousand!

It might be a little bit too much for me to hope for another convention-defying skill like Pride, but I should definitely be proactive about picking up any new, useful skills that I find. No point in saving up all these skill points, after all. Might as well spend them since I got them. I think it's going to be extremely inefficient for me to keep stockpiling skills in the hopes of unlocking the very high-cost skills.

Now then, M'lady Appraisal, if you wouldn't mind! I double-Appraise my skill point count, and start looking over the list that appears.

Hmmmm. There are still a ton of hundred-point skills here that I could buy, huh... A lot of these don't seem like I absolutely need to pick them up immediately, but since I've got some free time, maybe I should try to work on earning some proficiency with them? If I have that kind of luxury, though, I should probably be spending it on grinding out some more useful skills. Ahh, but there's also a chance that those skills are going to get *really* good if I max them out and they evolve, huh...

Hmmmm. What a decision. Well, I should probably take a look at all the skills that cost more than two hundred points, since I couldn't see them before.

Hmmmm. I can't really find any super-broken skills like Pride in here, huh... I'm feeling kinda disappointed, I guess I might have gotten my hopes up anyway, huh... I guess I was expecting this, huh...

...At least, that's what I was expecting to say.

I found one, though. A broken skill.

Patience (500): *The power of , a strength almost rivaling that of the gods. Expands the user's divine domain. While the user has MP remaining, no source of damage can reduce them to less than 1 HP. Furthermore, allows for interference in the domain, surpassing the system.*

Yet another skill full of mysterious keywords... And this one's also got an ability so good I'd almost say the system was joking. Does activating this thing mean that I'll burn mana instead of taking damage? I don't know how good the conversion rate on this is, but does this mean that I can just keep attacking like a zombie as long as I've still got any mana left over? I have no clue. This ability is so good, it's practically *dirty*.

This time, there's no room for doubt! Gotta click that button.

“You currently possess 500 skill points. The skill [Patience] can be acquired for 500 skill points. Would you like to acquire it now?”

Yyyyp!

“You have acquired the skill [Patience]. You have 0 skill points remaining.”

I am the wielder of Pride! Retreat is not even in my vocabulary! I shall obtain every one of these skills! Now, Taboo! Come at me! I care not!

“Proficiency requirements met. Your skill, [Taboo (LV 5)] has been raised to level 7.”

Oops, uh, sorry. I actually do care.

“Requirements have been met. You have earned the title [Lord of Patience], and have been awarded the skills [Corruption Immunity] and [Conviction]. Your existing skill, [Corruption Resistance (LV 4)], has been integrated with your new skill, [Corruption Immunity].”

Aaargh, just as I feared, Taboo leveled. Twice, this time! Well, whatever. The important part here is that I got a title! I’ve *got* to check this out, right now!

***Lord of Patience:** Acquired Skills – [Corruption Immunity] and [Conviction]. Acquisition criteria – Acquire the skill [Patience]. Effect – Increases the user’s defense and resistance statistics. Unlocks the Evil Eye skills. Increases the rate of proficiency gain towards resistance skills. Grants the holder a Lord’s Privileges. Description: A title awarded to those who rule over Patience.*

Ahh. Just as I thought. *Just* as I thought, another OP title. Bonus points towards defense and resistance! They each got a hundred points, so now my defense is 351 and my resistance is 380. That’s already more than enough, right? I’d think that’s pretty OP already, for a title.

Giving me a proficiency bonus so that I can level up my resistance skills more quickly is also huge! Since I’m evasion-specced, I get hit very rarely, which means that my resistance skills don’t actually tend to level up very often. This bonus fills in that gap nicely, which I’m really pleased about.

Here’s something that really caught my interest: “evil eye skills”. I reeeally want some of these. If I pick up one of these skills, I get to say things like, “Urgh... my right eye is throbbing!!” or “*THIS* is what it means to kill something,” right? This is exactly the kind of power that every delusional middle-schooler pretends to have. I want it!! ...But I just used all my skill poointoints!! Aargh, I really need to level up! Only more skill points can save me now...

Lastly, the title gave me Corruption Immunity and Conviction. Corruption Immunity is probably just max-leveled Corruption Resistance. Since that skill provided me with some sort of defense against attacks that directly violate my soul, Corruption Immunity should provide me complete protection. Now, if an opponent comes at me with Corruption Magic, I'll have no reason to fear.

Conviction: *Weighs the accumulated sins of a target as recognized by the system, then deals unblockable damage equivalent to the price of those crimes.*


Wow. So, in other words, this is a huge attack I can unleash on sinners. Unblockable damage is terrifying. This, however, has the same kind of stink to it that my Hell skill does, too. The stink of uselessness.






I try it out, but of course it doesn't do anything. It probably just misfired and had no effect because there wasn't any target, but I'm positive that this is going to be pretty freaking worthless either way.

Well, even if I can't actually use Conviction, this has been basically nothing but positives. Taboo may have leveled, but I couldn't help that, it was going to do what it was going to do. Taboo doesn't really feel like it's going to just straight-up kill me when it hits level ten, so I think I'm going to have to let this disadvantage run its course.

And, way more importantly than that, my stats have gone up *and* my skill roster has been enriched. I've got to be the strongest around, don't you think?

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K01The Pessimistic Daughter of the Duke

I'm A Spider, So What? – K01

The Pessimistic Daughter of the Duke

“Miss Okazaki, did we overdo it a bit today?”

“Not at a~all!”

“Sue’s bloodlust isn’t really important, and it’s not like Shun meant any harm by using Appraisal.”

“Katia, you’ve been too she~eltered! Didn’t you kno~ow? Even just being a little intimidating is dangerous, you kno~ow!”

“Really, huh...”

“That’s why it’s best not to use Appraisal recklessly~y! If your target has the same Appra~aisal level, or if they have good intuition, they can actually tell when you activa~ate it. Do you remember that weird feeling you got when you first met Potimu~us?”

“Ahh, that uncomfortable feeling. Is that what being Appraised feels like?”

“Preci~isely! In some situations, that alone can be seen as an act of aggressio~on! We~ell, if you’re in a really dangerous situation, you should already be thinking of e~veryone but your friends as your enemies, so it might not matter at that po~oint!”

“So you’re saying that they’ll kill me without even asking first?”

“They mi~ight!”

“So, Miss Okazaki–”

“How about you don’t ask that questio~on? I already told yo~ou, neither of us really gains anything from you Appraising me~e, but I guess you’re going to take that as an answer itself since you’re good at conje~cture, hmm?”

“Ah, okay. I guess that just tells me that you’ve done a lot of things so far, huh.”

“That’s ri~ight!”

“And I guess we still can’t meet any of the other students you’ve gathered up?”

“No, you ca~an’t.”

“Why not?”

“I can’t tell you tha~at either!”

“Hey, Miss Okazaki. Did you really manage to save twelve of our classmates? You had the whole wide world to search, how the hell did you find anyone? How am I supposed to take you at your word when you can’t even tell me how you did it?”

“Cross my heart and hope to die, I’m telling you the truth! My methods are still secret, but I’m definitely not lying about the number of students I managed to save.”

“So, what about the others, the ones you haven’t found yet? Be honest with me here, Miss Okazaki. You said there were six you hadn’t found yet. How many were you really, actually not able to find?”

“...Two. The other four were already dead.”

“...Oh.”

“I’m sorry.”

“You don’t have anything to apologize for, Miss Okazaki. Can I ask, who was it that died?”

“Hayashi Kouta, Wakaba Hiroyuki, Kogure Naofumi, and Sakurasaki Issei. Those four.”

“...Oh. ...I guess I can understand why you’ve almost stopped searching entirely.”

“I’m still going to look for the other two!”

“Hey, why are the elves helping you search? I’m guessing you explained our situation to them, but can we really depend on them?”

“That’s just something you’ll have to trust me on!”

“Even though you’re keeping so many secrets?”

“Yep, and this is another one!”

“I’m not like Shun, I can’t just trust someone based on my gut. I really want to believe you, but if you keep hiding so much from me, I can’t trust you from the bottom of my heart.”

“That’s the smart thing to do, though! Shun is a little too honest, you know.”

“I agree with you there. I think that guy would be completely useless if he didn’t have me around...”

“Oh?! Ohohoho?! Is this the seed of something that has yet to sprout? This is going to be interesting!”

“Huh? What are you talking about? ...You’ve got on a really creepy smile, Miss Okazaki. The fact that you look like a little kid right now makes that smile even ten times creepier, too.”

“Divine punishment!”

“Ow?!”

“Katia?”

“Yes, Sue, what is it?”

“What’s going on between you and Brother?”

“Why, we’re friends, are we not? What of it?”

“Liar. You’re not just normal friends are you? It’s the same with that elf you call “teacher”. And with the Saint candidate, and the Sword Emperor’s heir. What *are* all of you?”

“Am I the really the person who should be answering that question for you?”

“What do you mean?”

“I wonder, are you truly looking for *my* answer to that question?”

“Maybe...”

“*Maybe* you should ask that question of Shun. Even if I were to answer that for you, you would surely still be dissatisfied.”

“I... guess so.”

“I have somewhat of an idea as to what you might be feeling. Perhaps you should convey those emotions to the person who they are truly directed at, should you not?”

“...Okay. Sorry, Katia. And, thanks.”

“You are most welcome.”

“...Man, it was okay for me to just shove that entire problem off onto Shun, right? I mean, that sounds like a sibling problem to me. I’ve got nothing to do with it, but she still tried to drag me in... I gotta talk to Shun tomorrow.”

“Hey, Ooshima, why are you in here, changing clothes with the girls?”

“Huh? ...Ah, my bad, Hasebe. I’ve been living this new life for so long that I just stopped thinking about things like that. If it bothers you, I could do this at some other time. Or do you want me to go somewhere else?”

“Uh... ah... hmm.”

“Hey, what’s with that reaction?”

“Ah, um. I didn’t expect such a calm response, I guess. Aren’t you supposed to be getting really flustered and trying to explain yourself right now?”

“Welllll, ever since I reincarnated, girls’ bodies really haven’t been doing it for me. I’d be lying if I said that this wouldn’t be absolute bliss if I were still a guy, but now I don’t feel anything when I look at girls. Definitely no guilt, shame, or anything like that.”

“Huhhh... don’t you feel a little shy or embarrassed?”

“I’ve grown up as the daughter of a duke, so I had female attendants with me

whenever I changed my clothes or took a bath, right? I had to get past ‘shy’ a long time ago.”

“O... oh. That sounds like it was rough.”

“Yeah. That’s why I’m so glad to be free of all that now that I’m here at a boarding school. All of the other pampered rich girls here are whining about having to do everything themselves, but not me.”

“Yeah, I’ve been thinking the same thing.”

“Oh, so? Do you still want me to go find somewhere else to change?”


“Ah, I guess not. I feel better about it now that you’ve told me all that, I guess? You’re going to have to get used to this at some point, so I guess you can stay.”













“Really?”

“Yeah. I have a lot more experience with being a woman than you do, after all, and it is my sacred duty to be a guide. Leave it to me!”

“B... be gentle, please.”

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091Detection, you were a formidable foe.

I'm A Spider, So What? – 091

Detection, you were a formidable foe.

Ah! Now that Corruption Resistance turned into Corruption Immunity, I won't get those awful headaches from using Detection, will I? Those were basically like Corruption attacks, right? It's probably okay for me to call those "attacks", I guess? Normal headaches aren't able to blast all the way through Pain Tolerance like that, you know? So, if I'm now nullifying Corruption attacks completely instead of just resisting them, then I won't get those headaches, right?

Let's try it out.

Inhaaaaale, exhaaaaale. Right!

Detection: ON!

...Whoa. This is amazing. Seriously, this is way amazing. I used to be too focused on powering through my headaches, but now that they're gone this is suddenly seriously amazing, huh...

The splitting headache that I always got when I turned on Detection is gone. Well, no, if I want to be perfectly honest there is a little bit of one left, but it's totally easy to ignore thanks to Pain Tolerance. This is the kind of feverish headache that you get when you work your brain far too hard. After all, the amount of information that I'm getting out of Detection is enormous.

"Proficiency requirements met. Your skill, [Computation (LV 8)] has been raised to level 9."

"Proficiency requirements met. Your skill, [Multitasking (LV 6)] has been raised to level 7."

"Proficiency requirements met. Your skill, [Detection (LV 7)] has been raised to level 8."

“Proficiency requirements met. You have gained the skill [Divine Domain Expansion (LV 1)].”

It sounds like my skills just leveled up, but I’ll check on those in a bit. Right now, I need to let myself enjoy this feeling.

I am so happy that I can use Detection now, but the sensations I’m getting from having it activated overwhelm my emotions. Every bit of information about everything that’s around me is being assembled right in front of me. The flow of mana, the chemical composition of these rocks, the currents in the air, and so many other things are being poured into my head.

Feelings of omniscience bubble up in my mind. I suddenly know everything about everything that’s around me. All these things that should be impossible for me to understand are made clear to me, if just a little bit, through the power of this skill. And glimpsing the truth of the universe, even if it is only just that little bit, is like gazing out over an endless sea of information. Even this tiny cavern I’m in suddenly seems so vast. My awe and respect of the natural world has grown stronger than ever.

Oh no, I think I might be starting to cry. ...Although I still don’t know if spiders have tear ducts.

Let’s turn this off for a minute.

Whoof. That was amazing. How can I even try describe what that felt like? It was like... lying on the grass on a crystal-clear night, seeing the whole night sky glittering with stars above you. That’s as close as I can get.

Aaaaahh, I want to bask in that a little longer, but let’s switch to another feeling. Detection *worked*. Should I leave it on all the time, now that it won’t kill me? Hmmmm. It’s just... well... maybe such a high-efficiency skill might wind up being really inconvenient. If there’s so much information coming at me, then it might prove distracting, and in the middle of a battle the last thing I want is to lose my concentration.

Although, if I get used to having it on, it won’t be so bad, right? After all, when I first got Appraisal, I made myself sick from constantly spamming it, but I’m fine now that I’ve gotten used to it. So, although it might be kind of dangerous when I’m just starting out, I think I should leave Detection on all the time. It levels up

the rest of my skills, too, so leaving it on will do good things for me in the future.

So, without further ado, once again, Detection: ON!

Whoooooa. This really is waaay amazing... But! This isn't the time for me to stand here and be emotional about it. What I should do now is take a look at that skill that I somehow got just now.

“Proficiency requirements met. Your skill, [Multitasking (LV 7)] has been raised to level 8.”

“Proficiency requirements met. Your skill, [Divine Domain Expansion (LV 1)] has been raised to level 2.”

And as soon as I think it, that skill levels up again. What the heck is this? I think the description for Patience also said something about Divine Domains. Something about expanding them, right? And this is more expansion? So what you're saying is that my Divine Domain is getting pretty huge, huh? Well, let's Appraise it, to start.

Divine Domain Expansion: *Expands the user's Divine Domain.*

Well, ain't that an explanation. Whatever, though, because this is why the Lady Appraisal truly is so reliable! Please, Appraise this a second time!

Divine Domain: *The area, deep within the soul, which all living beings possess. The well from which all life springs, and the final thing upon which you may rely.*

Umm? I don't get it. Well, I get that it's an important part of my soul, but what does expanding that do? Hmm... It's still a mystery, huh... I'm glad that the skill level went up, but I can't tell if I'm feeling any different...

“Proficiency requirements met. Your skill, [Computation (LV 9)] has been raised to level 10. Your [Computation] skill has reached its maximum level and has evolved into a new skill, [Rapid Computation (LV 1)].”

“Proficiency requirements met. Your skill, [Detection (LV 8)] has been raised to level 9.”

My skill levels are still going up this fast?! Computation just hit max level! And


now it's Rapid Computation. That looks like it's just a straight upgrade.











Now then, the thing I was really hoping that I would get out of Detection, from the very start, was detecting enemies. My own enemy-detection skills are naturally super high, though, so I've actually been getting along just fine without it, more or less. When I couple those skills with Detection, it will be impossible to describe my enemy-spotting as anything but perfect. Now, it is absolutely impossible to sneak up on me, is it not?! I shall not be ambushed!

And next up, of course, is Mana Perception. If my theory is correct, if I have both this and Mana Manipulation, then I can use both of them in conjunction to finally, *finally* be able to cast my magic. Probably. Then I'll finally be able to unleash the dark magicks I have been hoarding for so long: Abyssal Magic and Corruption Magic!!

But, skill points, though! Uuuggggggh! I definitely do not regret buying Patience, but *man* does not having any skill points right now leave the bitterest taste in my mouth. Argh, and my next step was buying Evil Eye skills! What do I dooo? I want both of those! Ghaah! This is absolutely the first-worldiest of first-world problems, but I seriously can't decide!!

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092Once again I have cut a worthless object...

I'm A Spider, So What? – 092

Once again I have cut a worthless object...

Ohh! Found some! Before me, I see two seahorses swimming calmly around on the surface of the magma. At least, those are the only two things in my actual field of view, but Mr. Detection is telling me that there's a single catfish swimming underneath the magma. The three of them aren't attacking each other at all, just calmly swimming through the magma. Hmmf... They're probably the same species, so maybe it's not unusual for them to be together like this?

Two seahorses, one catfish. That's the kind of formation that I would have hesitated to fight against before I evolved, but I think it's finally about time for me to test out the combat potential of my new body. Plus, before I evolved, I took down an eel! How can I possibly call these under-evolved monsters anything but small fry? There's no way I'm going to lose.

Heh heh heh. So, if this is how we're doing things, how do you three feel about being the guinea pigs for my new body and my new skills?

First thing's first: got to start off with a sneak attack. I'll throw a rock, as usual. I think... I'll skip the poison for now. I want to see what kind of damage I can get just by throwing a plain ol' rock. It used to take off five, maybe six health, so it's going to be, what, doubled?

Hey, seahorse! You so Pringles! _Where yo curleh mustace at?!_¹

...Is *anybody* going to get that meme?

Oh, it hit! It hit! It... hit? What was that stupendous sound, though? It sounded like a rock getting smashed. Like, *kgssssshh*, you know? *Kgssssshh*. The

seahorse is sinking down beneath the magma, too... did it just die?

Ah! It bobbed back up! ...Whoa?! Its missing a third of its health! Seriously?

Oh, here comes a fireball... So slowly?! Uh, is this for real? Just a plain, simple pitch? Not a curveball, not a slider, just an ordinary fastball coming straight at me? This is waaay too slow compared to what that eel was throwing at me. I could sidestep this one while humming a jaunty little tune. ...I can't actually hum, though.

Seriously... I'm actually kind of shocked about how much better I've gotten, even better than I was expecting! What should I do? At this rate, I could beat them just by chucking rocks at them. If they die while in the magma, though, their corpses are just going to sink down and I won't be able to get them, huh... And I *do* still have a surplus of stamina thanks to Overeating, but I really want to build my stocks back up, huh...

Ah, here comes the catfish. Hm? Is it coming up here to help the seahorses? I guess they really do have some sort of bond of kinship, since they're party of the same evolutionary chain. The other seahorse is also moving closer to help out its ally. I guess that they usually don't roam around together, but they'll help each other out if one of their own happens to be in danger nearby. Oh man, I just realized the worst case scenario: if another eel shows up to help these guys out. I reeeeeeally hope that doesn't happen...

The catfish spits out a fireball. Yyyyp. It's slow. Compared to the seahorses' ones, this is much faster and bigger, but it's obvious that it's not even in the same league as that eel's. I lazily step to one side, contemplating things like "friendship" or whatever.

"Proficiency requirements met. Your skill, [Parallel Thought (LV 8)] has been raised to level 9."

Aaaah! That's because I was thinking about whatever while I was fighting, huh.

Well, for now, let's just keep dodging around like this and wait for their mana to run dry. I could keep throwing rocks at them, but if I do that then their corpses really will just sink into the magma, so I really just need to lure them up here onto solid ground before I finish them off. Ah, no, it's okay if I hit the catfish, right? It's only the seahorses that look like they'll die if I hit them too hard. To

be perfectly honest, none of their fireballs are even coming close to grazing me, despite there being three creatures' worth of them coming at me at once. Since I've got so much spare time, then, why don't I work on cranking out some experience for Throwing and Aiming?

Let's do this again! Oh I got da mango catfish... yo I think of New York *Knicks!*²

Yeah! Got him, got him. Hm. As you'd expect from a catfish, it didn't lose much health at all. It's got a great defense stat. If we're just looking at the raw physical defense numbers, it's almost as good as mine...

...Wait. Now that I'm thinking about it, has my defense stat actually gotten higher than a catfish's?! Man, this is seriously incredible now that I think about it. Even though I look like a frail little spider no matter how you look at me, I'm somehow even tougher than that catfish, covered in dragon scales... Truly, a mystery of the world.

While I've been thinking about these useless things, one of the seahorses ran out of mana and is slowly crawling up onto solid ground. Hey, idiot. Yeah, you, the idiot inching towards me. You saw me dodge all of your attacks, so it should be *reeeeally* obvious how much more powerful I am than you. ...Ah, wait a sec. I think I just realized something pretty awful. Catfish... run, when they see they can't win, right?

I can't let that happen, right? If a seahorse gets away, I don't actually care, but you, catfish? You're going nowhere, asshole. Read my lips: you're, going, no, where. Whoa, look. You're shaking now, aren't you? Don't be scared, don't be scared, okaaaay? Just get up here onto the ground, okay? Immediately. It's okay. You're not scared, after aaaall...

Oi, wait! Don't run, jerk! ...Agh, get out of my way, you stupid seahorse! I swing the sickles on my forelegs, slashing out at the seahorse that's blocking my path. With a whisper, they pass cleanly through its body, and the seahorse splits in two.

Huh? Whaaaaat? Did *I* just do that? Oh *man*, my sickles are amazing. Ah, this might have been an accident, but... is this the first monster I've ever just straight-up slaughtered with my bare hands? I think that literally every other kill

has been through poison. Oh, I guess a bunch of monkeys fell to their deaths, but, still, this is my very first hands-on murder. Even though it was my first time, it happened so quickly I didn't feel a thing...

Hey wait a minute, CATFISH! Ah... aaaaahh... it ran away... my catfish... my tasty, tasty catfish...

The other seahorse seems to have run out of mana as well and is crawling its way up onto solid ground. Good. *I have some frustrations to vent.*

First off, let's try adding a little bit of paralysis to my Weak Poison. As the seahorse starts to charge straight at me, I zip over to the side. It stares blankly at me as it hurtles past, right into the ball of poison that I just synthesized.

Oh? Ohh!! It's going limp, it's going limp! So *this* is paralysis, huh... Wait, its health is dropping like a rock! Why?! ...Ah, Weak Poison still is poison, after all, so it still does damage... Wait, no, I was deliberately trying to only test out the paralysis component, so I thought I made the damage as low as I possibly could. How the heck is it still that powerful? ...Don't tell me, is my poison damage based on my stats, too?

If that's the case, then, man, this was just Weak Poison, right? What the heck is my Deadly Spider Venom going to be able to do now? It *wrecked* that eel, before. ...Just thinking about it is pretty terrifying.

Looks like my combat potential increased even more than I thought.












Translator's notes for this chapter:

1. Originally ("konna hazu waaa"), a MUGEN meme from, like, 2008. Substituted with an [equally old, equally hype meme from the western FGC](#).
 2. See note 1.
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093That which crosses the strata

I'm A Spider, So What? – 093

That which crosses the strata

Caaaatfiiiish~! Where aaaare yooooou~! Come out and plaaaay~!

As I aimlessly wander through these molten caverns, half-heartedly searching for catfish, I discover a particular something. ...No, “discover” isn’t the right word. I saw it. It was right there. It was so ludicrously conspicuous that it would be extremely unusual for me to *not* see it.

Here, in front of me, is a gigantic hole. I dropped down into the lower strata to begin with by falling into a large shaft, but this is much, much larger than that. This pit ties together the top and bottom of the dungeon.

That’s right, this pit is connected with the upper strata. Most likely, if I climb up this thing, I’ll finally get back up there, and if I descend, I’ll go back down to the lower strata. I mean, that’s what I think would probably happen. I’m just going to go around it, though.

...Ah, that wasn’t a joke. I’m actually pretty unhappy that you thought my sense of humor was bad enough that I’d make such a terrible joke.

So, leaving that bit of business aside, this hole. Whenever I look at it, Mister Detection starts pinging danger warnings at me. And that’s putting it lightly. The *instant* it entered my field of view, Detection started pinging. It’s blatantly obvious that this thing is extremely dangerous.

So, right now, I am in the middle of carefully navigating myself around it, making a huge circle to avoid getting anywhere near that thing. It’s that bad! I know how this trope plays out: if I get too close, I’m going to have a *bad time*. All this right when I thought that evolving had finally made me STRONK.¹

Yeah. Nothing good has ever come out of me getting cocky, so far. Nothing even remotely *okay* has ever come out of me getting cocky. I remember that now. A modest heart is the best heart. So, don't mind me, I'm just going to do everything I possibly can to avoid triggering that trope.

That's right. I'm not getting close to that hole. I'm not getting *anywhere* close to that hole, at all. And don't think that this is the part where I yell "psych" and dash straight towards it. I'm not a comedian.²

While thinking all of that to myself, I make my way far, far away from that hole. Then, right when it's just still barely in my sight, Mister Detection starts screaming. This is maximum danger. I'm cowering in the shadow of a rock before I even realize it. I risk taking the briefest of glances, and there I see, before my very eyes, crawling down the hole from above, *that*.

I can still see it clearly, even from this enormous distance. It's that huge. Its carapace is black as pitch. Eight bright red eyes glimmer strangely atop its head. Eight spindly legs cling to the vertical walls as it climbs. Five sharp claws at the end of each leg, almost like a human hand. An enormous jaw that looks like it could devour the world.

What this thing is, is a monster. A *real* monster, unlike those poor excuses I've seen so far. I don't think there's a single thing alive that could possibly stand up to such a creature. This is the same kind of overwhelming difference in power that I felt when I fought the Earth Dragon. I'm almost a little upset that I'm out of range for Lady Appraisal to do her job. I'm sure that its stats are so obnoxiously powerful that I'd start laughing.

Isn't that right, Mother? This is my second chance encounter with this enormous spider.

It's absurd to think that there could be more than one of these incomprehensible existences crawling around the dungeon. If there were, I'd be long dead. No, this is very clearly the same creature I caught a glimpse of when I was born: my mother.

She moves leisurely down the hole. Her movements are almost grand, or majestic, making her seem like the true queen of the entire dungeon. I can't think of a single creature in these caverns that could stop her stately parade. With how

far down the power curve I am, I can't say anything for certain, but... is my mother even stronger than an Earth Dragon?

I want to get close enough to Appraise her, but that's straight-up suicidal. Curiosity killed the cat, after all, and I'm not going to let it kill me. ...Because I'm a spider, not a cat.

I'd been wondering about my mother. She was obviously too powerful to be wandering around in the upper strata, but it looks like she uses holes like this to move between the different strata. Maybe she was up in the upper layer just by chance. Her true habitat is probably in the lower strata, or maybe even a stratum further beneath that. Even the strongest monsters in the lower strata couldn't possibly pose a threat to my mother.

I'm glad that I decided to stay far away from that hole. This isn't a battlefield where there's even a question of whether or not I can win. Just like with the Earth Dragon, my demise is assured the very instant she catches sight of me. She is a terrible calamity, walking on eight legs.

Then, abruptly, she stops dead, staring fixedly at whatever it was that she noticed. Then, slowly, she turns to point her enormous jaws in that direction.

In the next instant, the whole world trembled.

This is not a figure of speech. It didn't just *feel* like the world trembled, the earth actually shook beneath my feet. There was such a sudden and stupendous crash that it felt like the dungeon itself screamed in pain. Let me use sound effects to describe it, comic-book style: kshhBOOOM!! Rmblrmblrmbl.

That attack was so far beyond my level of comprehension that I don't even have any idea what it was. But I can clearly see that there is now an enormous, empty crater where there once was a much smaller pool of magma. Nobody but my mother will ever be able to know if there was even something there to begin with. Did something blunder into my mother's field of view, or was there something already there that offended her? We'll never know, because whatever might have been in there has been obliterated. Not even a tiny scrap could remain after an attack like that.

Magma slowly starts to trickle into the brand new crater. I'm sure the new pool that will form is going to be much bigger than the old one.

I'm really glad that attack was not aimed at me. If it was, I would have been dead before I even realized what was happening. I desperately hide behind the rock, making myself as absolutely still as I possibly can to avoid detection.

“Proficiency requirements met. Your skill, [Stealth (LV 7)] has been raised to level 8.”

“Proficiency requirements met. Your skill, [Silence (LV 1)] has been raised to level 2.”

“Proficiency requirements met. Your skill, [Fear Resistance (LV 7)] has been raised to level 8.”


Then, slowly, my mother disappeared down into the hole.




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






1. Originally, she described herself here as (a slang misspelling of a slang pronunciation of “strong”) which is a meme thrown around on light novel forums to describe particularly egregious Mary Sues, with origins in gaming. Substituted with “stronk”, a similar meme with similar origins.

2. Originally, this was referring to the Ostrich's Law, a gag used in Japanese variety shows. Basically, there's a task that person A isn't really sold on doing, but he says he's going to do it anyway. Persons B through Z say “nah, it's okay, I'll do it instead,” with the responsibility for doing the thing basically going around in a circle. When it gets back to person A, also says “nah, I'll do it”, then everyone else yells “BY ALL MEANS!!”. I've substituted this for another, more Western gag.

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094I thought I was doing great, but I know I can do better.

I'm A Spider, So What? – 094

I thought I was doing great, but I know I can do better.

No waaaay. Mother, no waaaay! Is there a single living thing that could bring that behemoth down? Surely anyone that felled such a beast would be remembered as a mighty hero.

Maaaaan, I thought I was doing great, but this was a pretty huge reminder that I can be doing better, even though “better” in this case is so far above me that I can’t even begin to imagine how to get there. This random encounter with my mother must have been a sign from the heavens: don’t get carried away. Yep.

Honestly, the way I am now, there’s not a single possible way for me to oppose creatures like my mother or an Earth Dragon. Meeting them definitely starts my death timer. Forget fighting them, even running the heck away is practically out of the question.

“Proficiency requirements met. Your skill, [Detection (LV 9)] has been raised to level 10.”

Eh? Really? Mister Detection’s hit his cap already? ...Huh? But he’s not deriving or evolving? Huhhhh... This is actually kind of underwhelming, isn’t it? I worked soooo hard to finally get Detection working, you know. Sure, I’ve gotten an astoundingly great return on my investment, but I’m *greedy*. I want something moooore! Even though it’s impossible for me to fight Mother, I at least want to get strong enough to make running away even a little bit possible! Hey, “Voice of Heaven”, is this really all I’m going to get?

“fzzt...,ffzssshhh....., ...zzh...”

Hm? What was that? ...Am I hearing things?

Welllll, that was a long shot anyway, nothing to be done about it. Although, “getting stronger” really is the simplest and most obvious solution to this problem. If I keep getting stronger (without getting too full of myself), then I can probably get to the point where I can actually escape from crazy out-of-the-ordinary foes like that.

So, if that’s what I’m going with, then it’s time to focus on actually getting stronger. Step one: level up. From now on, I’m going to actively hunt out monsters for XP. So far, since evolving, I’ve killed two seahorses. Since Pride gives me a bonus to my experience gain, I should be pretty close to leveling up right now. Evolving resets my level, so it only makes sense that the experience required to level up gets reset as well, at least to a certain degree.

If I compare the effort it takes to go from level nine to ten before evolving, and one to two after, the latter is definitely a lot faster. However, if I compare a pre-evolution grind from level one to two to a post-evolution one, then it’s actually noticeably slower post-evolution. So, it seems to me that the experience requirements do indeed get reset, but not quite all the way.

Based on what I’ve experienced so far, my next level-up is probably going to happen after I kill one more monster. Heck, I wouldn’t have thought it was strange if I leveled up after killing that second seahorse. If I kill something as strong as a catfish, I bet I’d go up two levels at once. So, let’s put hunting at the top of my list.

Step two: skills. I’ve been working on grinding a bunch of those out as I’ve been moving around. My focus so far has been on Appraisal and Detection, though I’ve also been working on Foresight and Accelerated Thought. Detection’s maxed out now, but I’ve still got a lot of its support skills to level. So, until I can max all of those out, I’m going to keep Detection running constantly as I go.

While that’s happening, I should start focusing on some of the other skills that I can grind while moving. The safest of those are probably my sensory-boosting skills. If I keep doing things like concentrating on spotting things in the distance or sniffing around for any strange scents as I walk, they’ll probably level up pretty easily. They’re pretty high already, so it shouldn’t be too long before they’re maxed out. Let’s go with that, then.

Then, there's one more thing. This isn't something that I can work on while moving, so I need to find a place that I can safely stop and seriously practice it. I'm talking, of course, about Mana Manipulation.

If you think about it, it's possible to pick up skills without spending skill points if you accumulate enough proficiency. Since that's the case, I should save my skill points for things that I can't easily acquire with proficiency, like those evil eye skills, and spend some time on trying to figure out how to gain proficiency with other skills, like Mana Manipulation.

Thanks to Detection, using Mana Perception isn't a problem at all. If I concentrate, I can feel the flow of mana as it drifts through the air. If I can somehow figure out how to manipulate that mana, or maybe even just force it to move somewhere, then I should be able to start accumulating experience, getting me Mana Manipulation without having to spend a single skill point on it... probably. If I can just get that skill, then I can start practicing magic as much as I want.

However, let's not forget my original goal here: to climb the heck up out of the middle strata. Taking the time to grind out things that I can't do while moving will only slow me down, so I'm not going to do anything that specifically requires me to stop. Thus, I will keep moving, until the bitter end. These middle strata aren't any place for me to settle down. I can't lose sight of that.

“Proficiency requirements met. Your skill, [Accelerated Thought (LV 3)] has been raised to level 4.”

“Proficiency requirements met. Your skill, [Foresight (LV 3)] has been raised to level 4.”

Alright! Thanks to my Lord of Pride title, my mental skills level up very quickly. I'm going to keep pounding away at these.


Lord of Patience has a similar effect, letting me boost my defensive skills more quickly, but those aren't really the kinds of things I can voluntarily work on leveling. If I really wanted to mutilate myself, I could use Poison Synthesis to level Greater Poison Resistance and Paralysis Resistance, and then use All-Purpose Silk to level my Slashing, Bashing, Damage, Decay, and maybe even Ballistic resistances. That would do a good enough job at leveling those skills, but that's the kind of thing that I'd need a long-term base of operations for. Not












only is my regeneration way slower here in the middle strata, but I don't have any real place for me to get as much rest as I think I'd need.

Leveling my stat-boosting skills is something that I really want to get done sooner rather than later, but that's also something that really requires settling down first. It would be great if it leveled a bunch while I was in combat, but if I really want any more progress than that I'd really have to do some focused strength training. When I actually have some spare time and energy, I think I'll work on that a little bit.

For now, I guess I'll stick with the plan of grinding up my skills, especially my sensory-boosting skills, while I'm moving forward. I'm especially interested in Enhanced Vision, since it's already at level nine, so I think I'm going to focus on that.

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095Superior species

I'm A Spider, So What? – 095

Superior species

Shortly after I decided that I was going to get stronger, I finally found another monster.

Elro Devgyard — LV 4

Statistics:

HP: 103/103 (green)

MP: 41/41 (blue)

SP: 76/76 (yellow), 69/69 (red)

Avg. Offense: 56

Avg. Defense: 48

Avg. Magic Power: 21

Avg. Resistance: 18

Avg. Speed: 41

Skills:

[Swimming (LV 2)] • [Heat Nullification]

This thing is really strange, like a sphere with four legs sticking out of it. I think I'm going to call it a pillbug, but this thing... it's even more of a small fry than the seahorses are. The only reason that fighting them is even remotely difficult is that they sprint for the safety of the magma as soon as they sense danger, which means I need to make sure I quickly bring them down while they're still on land.

This one's on solid ground right now, so I either have to kill it in one strike or paralyze it so that it can't run away. I think I'll use my Deadly Spider Venom, and kill two bugs with one stone.

I leap out from the shadow of a rock, swiftly closing in on my prey. Before it even has a chance to notice my existence, I've activated Poison Synthesis. I have no idea where the mouth on a pillbug could possibly be, so I just splash it everywhere.

In an instant, its health disappears completely. So fast!! ...So weak!!

“Experience requirements met. Zoa Ere, you have grown from level 1 to level 2. Every ability score has been increased. Acquired bonus skill proficiencies from leveling up: your skill [Slashing Enhancement (LV 2)] has been raised to level 3 and your skill [SP Consumption Reduction (LV 3)] has been raised to level 4. You have acquired additional skill points.”

W, well, just as planned, I got my level-up. No problems here, nuh uh. I was just a little surprised by how weak it was.

While I take a moment to settle myself, I check my new stats.

Zoa Ere — LV 2 — (no name)

Statistics:

HP: 215/215 (green) **(20 up)**

MP: 311/311 (blue) **(20 up)**

SP: 215/215 (yellow) **(20 up)**, 215/215 (red) +399 **(20 up)**

Avg. Offense: 269 **(18 up)**

Avg. Defense: 369 **(18 up)**

Avg. Magic Power: 255 **(10 up)**

Avg. Resistance: 390 **(10 up)**

Avg. Speed: 1342 **(70 up)**

Skills:

[Automatic HP Recovery (LV 6)] •

[Accelerated MP Recovery (LV 4)] •

[MP Consumption Reduction (LV 3)] •

[Accelerated SP Recovery (LV 3)] •

[SP Consumption Reduction (LV 4)] •

[Damage Enhancement (LV 2)] • [Slashing Enhancement (LV 3)] •

[Poison Enhancement (LV 4)] • [Battle Spirit (LV 2)] •

[Willpower Allocation (LV 2)] • [Greater Poison Attack (LV 3)] •

[Decaying Attack (LV 1)] • [Poison Synthesis (LV 8)] •
 [Thread Talent (LV 3)] • [All-Purpose Silk (LV 1)] •
 [Thread Manipulation (LV 8)] • [Throwing (LV 7)] •
 [3-D Maneuvering (LV 5)] • [Concentration (LV 10)] •
 [Accelerated Thought (LV 4)] • [Foresight (LV 4)] •
 [Multitasking (LV 9)] • [Rapid Computation (LV 1)] •
 [Aiming (LV 8)] • [Evasion (LV 7)] • [Appraisal (LV 9)] •
 [Detection (LV 10)] • [Stealth (LV 8)] • [Silence (LV 2)] •
 [Conviction] • [Hell] • [Corruption Magic (LV 3)] •
 [Shadow Magic (LV 3)] • [Poison Magic (LV 3)] •
 [Abyssal Magic (LV 10)] • [Patience] • [Pride] • [Overeating (LV 9)] •
 [Night Vision (LV 10)] • [Visible Spectrum Expansion (LV 2)] •
 [Damage Resistance (LV 2)] • [Bashing Resistance (LV 2)] •
 [Slashing Resistance (LV 3)] • [Fire Resistance (LV 2)] •
 [Greater Poison Resistance (LV 2)] • [Paralysis Resistance (LV 4)] •
 [Petrification Resistance (LV 3)] • [Acid Resistance (LV 4)] •
 [Decay Resistance (LV 3)] • [Fainting Resistance (LV 3)] •
 [Fear Resistance (LV 8)] • [Corruption Immunity] • [Ignore Pain] •
 [Pain Tolerance (LV 7)] • [Enhanced Vision (LV 9)] •
 [Enhanced Hearing (LV 8)] • [Enhanced Smell (LV 7)] •
 [Enhanced Taste (LV 7)] • [Enhanced Touch (LV 7)] •
 [Divine Domain Expansion (LV 2)] • [Vitality (LV 9)] •
 [Mana Pool (LV 8)] • [Alacrity (LV 9)] • [Endurance (LV 9)] •
 [Greater Strength (LV 4)] • [Greater Toughness (LV 4)] •
 [Resistance (LV 4)] • [Kartikeya (LV 3)] • [Taboo (LV 7)] • []

Skill points available: 50

Titles:

[Filth Eater] • [Kin Eater] • [Assassin] • [Monster Slayer] •
 [Poison User] • [Silk User] • [Merciless] • [Monster Slaughterer] •
 [Lord of Pride] • [Lord of Patience]

Hm? Hmmm? What's this? My stats, they're significantly higher, aren't they?
 Before now, if we ignore Pride's effects, I was getting, well, one point in
 everything as I leveled. I'm getting *waaaay* more now! Whoa, did the amount of
 stat gain maybe change when I evolved?

O... oh!! That's just what I'd expect from a species that they say has high combat potential! I never would have thought that evolving would change my stat gains. This owns. This seriously owns.

On top of that, I got *fifty* skill points! Before now I was just getting twenty, but I just got two and a half times that many! I might be able to pick up an Evil Eye skill next level, huh! Ahaha! This is way good. Waaaay good.

If things keep going like this, I'm not going to need to stop and seriously try to train proficiency in Mana Manipulation. Aaaaah, no, wait, if I can do it on my own, then it's probably best for me to actually try to do so. I don't actually know if an Evil Eye is going to cost me more than 100 skill points, after all. I'm getting too optimistic here.

Yeah, I can't afford to get worked up here. I've never, ever gotten anything good out of letting myself get too excited about something.














Although, looking here at the display again, it seems like my stat gains were actually pretty balanced and stable across the board. I'm still massively specialized in speed, but thanks to Patience my Defense and Resistance stats went up a bunch as well. My attack stat is starting to look a little low in comparison, but in reality I back up my physical attacks with poison, so even this is pretty high. Since I'm still so good at evading, it's unlikely that I'll ever get hit by an attack, but if I do, now I've got some extra defense to keep me safe. I'm out of the one-hit-instant-death danger zone!

Huh? If you list everything out like that, it makes me sound like the strongest monster down here, right? ...Wait, no, no, I must not let myself get worked up. I need to go forth with a humble heart.

Author's note: I've added numbers to show stat increases. What do you think?

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S14Academy Life

I'm A Spider, So What? – S14

Academy Life

My time at the Academy so far has been alright. Most of the stuff we're covering in our classes is stuff that I know, but I make myself sit through it so that I can review the material. When I get so bored that I can't stand it, I work on leveling whatever skills I can practice without letting anyone see.

If you just look at my classes, things look calm and peaceful, but I actually am having quite a few problems on the human relations front.

The first problem is the teachers. They essentially treat me one of three ways: they either go out of their way to suck up to me, they distance themselves from me to avoid being influenced, or they try to tangle themselves in my life as much as they can. It could be because I'm royalty, but I think it's really because my ability scores already vastly exceed those of my teachers.

I don't really have much political influence, but I can't just outright avoid the teachers that try to suck up to me lest I offend them. If I let them get too entangled, though, then it starts getting really annoying. I really do prefer the teachers that just interact with me normally, but those are few and far between.

The next problem is the students. They can be divided into three categories, too: the toadies that suck up to me, the students that surround me at a distance, and those that are arbitrarily hostile towards me. There's nobody who wants to treat me normally, so at the end of the day I'm usually only left with Sue and Katia. Hasebe joins us too, so the four of us wind up hanging out a lot.

Katia is usually able to drive the toadies away. Since I can usually only put on a forced smile and let those kinds of people follow my around, I'm very grateful to have a friend that can unhesitatingly cut them down for me.

As for the ones that always follow me at a distance, they can be divided into a few more types. There's those that look at me with constant yearning, those who keep looking at me coolly to show how unaffected they are, those who want to jump in and make my acquaintance but haven't found the right opportunity yet, and so on, and so on.

The most problematic group are those students that are arbitrarily hostile towards me. These people are almost always either the nobles or high-ranking aristocrats from other nations. Occasionally, it's one of the commoners that was suddenly dragged up into this world.

If there's one thing they have in common, it's their conceitedness. Many of them either have high station or high skill, and they see me as an eyesore for having even greater station and skill than they.

Sometimes, I'd get challenged to duels. If I were to duel a person from another country, it would be an international incident, so I naturally turned down every request. When I did that, though, they started spreading rumors that the genius prince is a coward who wouldn't fight any duels.

Give me a break.

However, these are *children* that we're talking about. If you add up the time I spent in my previous and current lives, I'm already an adult by now, so I can just smile and shrug it all off. Sue, however, always goes berserk, and I'm the one who gets stuck with holding her back when she tries to purge my opponents.

She's been behaving somewhat strangely, lately. It feels like she has something important to ask me, but she just can't make it come out. I have some kind of idea about what she wants to ask, though. Well, more accurately, Katia told me.

"Hey, about Sue... she wants to know about our relationship."

"Huh? Our relationship?"

"I mean, she wants to know about how we're connected, like from our previous life. She started to guess that something was up after we met with Miss Okazaki and she saw how we interacted with her."

"Ahh... come to think of it, we do actually talk in Japanese a lot in front of her, don't we."

"Exactly. If your older brother, who you've known for both of your entire lives, suddenly meets with a person you've never seen before and starts talking in a

foreign language you've never heard before, you'd totally think that was weird."

"Yeah, you're right... whoops."

"Well, when she finally asks you about it, it's up to you if you're going to tell her the truth or not."

"Huh? I shouldn't, right?"

"It's your decision, man. Whether you're going to keep lying to her about what's happening or tell her the truth, make up your mind quickly and get it over with. It's unfair to Sue otherwise, you know?"

"Yeah, you're right."

So, it seems like she's been trying to ask me about my relationship with the others. To be honest, though, I can't really make up my mind. How do I even explain this to her? "You thought I was your older brother, but this entire time I've really been just some strange guy you've never met who reincarnated into your older brother's body." I'm terrified that she's going to hate me if I say that to her.

All this time, I've tried to love her like my own little sister. But, how does Sue look at me? I know that she's really attached to me, but if she knew that the older brother she had been clinging to was some other stranger, what would she think? I grew up here with all of the memories and experiences from my previous life. If you compare me to Sue, who has kept up with me this entire time, I've been really dishonest. Is she going to look at me with scorn when she realizes that? I don't think Sue would ever scorn me, but even just imagining what that would be like is awful.

If that's the case, then you'd think that I should lie to her, but even that seems insincere to me. If my real little sister came to me like that, having such trouble asking what she wanted to, there's no way I'd just carelessly dodge around her questions. If I'm going to lie to her, I'm going to have to commit to lying to her for my entire life.

I still have no idea what I should actually do. However, if Sue does finally ask me about it, I need to give a serious answer. If Katia hadn't warned me in advance, I'd probably just dance around the question without thinking too deeply about it. I'm very glad that she advised me about this in advance.

So, it's plain to see that human relations aren't very good for me here at school, whether they're between my friends or between the other students here. On top

of all that, though, the other three reincarnated people have me at wits' end.

Miss Okazaki is, as always, an enigma. For a while, we didn't see her anywhere, not even for class, so I thought she might have gone somewhere. Suddenly, though, without warning, she started showing up again like nothing had ever been the matter. I had lots of questions for her the next time we met, but she gave nothing but lazy, noncommittal answers. When I started specifically asking about what happened to Kyouya, it felt like she started evading even harder.

Kyouya was a very close friend of Katia's and mine back in our previous lives. However, Miss Okazaki isn't telling us anything about where he might be now. I somehow managed to piece together a few details, though, and it seems like Kyouya might not actually be under the elves' protection. Even though I was very curious about where he was or even how he was doing, Miss Okazaki just kept blithely evading every question I threw at her.

Hasebe is also quite a bit of a problem. Her name here in this world is Yulene Ulen. Her last name is the name of the church she was raised in, instead of an orphanage. Hasebe—no, Yulie—was raised as an orphan. There seem to be a lot of orphans in this world. In Japan, there were quite a few of them, but in this harsh world where civilization has yet to develop quite as far, there are far more.

I'm not saying that this is a good thing at all, but what usually happens is that the orphans who are raised by the church wind up staying with the church once they're old enough to understand what's happening to them. Yulie, though, is different. From birth, she not only possessed all of her memories from the previous world, but also her sense of self.

The first thing I realized after having been reborn was that I was suddenly a baby. This was an enormous shock, although I'm just speaking from my own experience. I was disoriented, confused, and above all extremely anxious. What happened to me? Did I die? What happened to me back then?

For me, my worries were without end, but I they can't even compare to what Yulie must have felt after being thrown into that same situation. It seems like her own shock was far greater than my own. Honestly, I can't possibly imagine what Yulie must have been feeling at that time.

In the middle of her absolute anxiety, there was something she could cling to: the teachings of the Words of God. This is the religion of the church who found and

raised her, and is also a religion that's practiced widely across human lands. Their teachings, if I had to summarize them in one sentence, say that one must constantly strive to raise one's skills so that one may hear the Words of God.

The Words of God. I honestly can't understand whatever this is. It seems like it's in reference to the game-like system messages you hear when you level something up. Everyone in this world, though, thinks that hearing this voice is completely and utterly natural. The only people in this world who could possibly find it strange are those of us who were reincarnated into this world. To everyone else, it's a part of life, just like skills and stats are. That's just how this world is.

The churches of the Words of God preach that the system message voice is really the voice of a god, and one of the highest tenets of this religion is that everyone should try their hardest to raise their skills and levels as much as possible so that they can hear that divine voice more often. As for me, I can't help but wonder what the hell is up with this nonsensical doctrine, but that doesn't change the fact that it's commonly accepted in this world.

Yulie, like many other people in this world, has been completely immersed in this religion, though I would have thought she'd have the same thoughts about it as me.

"Shun, you've leveled your skills so much! I think that's really amazing. You should keep raising your skills steadily like that, so you can hear even more of the words of God."

"Shun, you haven't raised your own level at all? That's not good at all! When you raise your level, God says many things to you at once, you know? You need to work on leveling up so that you can hear God's voice."

"Shun, you have Appraisal, right? If you ever see someone with a skill named 'Taboo', I want you to tell me about it right away. I can't possibly let anyone who has leveled a skill the gods themselves have declared to be taboo survive long enough to do any damage."

"Shun, you got a new rank in a skill, so you must have heard the words of God again! Aaahhh, the voice of God was heard once again. Today, I can truly be happy."

I pulled away from her. She was just acting so strangely that I couldn't stay too close. After all, her eyes always got muddy and unfocused whenever she started raving about the gods. There was no way I could hang out with someone like

that.


Yulie, however, never seemed like she should have turned out like this. Somewhere deep within her is a perfectly ordinary high school girl. It must have been her environment that shaped her into who she is today. The constant dread from being reincarnated. The despair from having been abandoned by her parents. The anxiousness from having to live in this completely unfamiliar world.






Then, in the midst of all that, she would have heard a system message, speaking in familiar, nostalgic Japanese. It's really easy to see how that could have become her emotional support. On top of that, she was surrounded by people who worshiped that same voice. Yulie had been someone who would go with the flow of things, so it might have been almost inevitable that she'd get caught up in that religion. I wonder if, after getting swept up, she used the maximum benefits of having been reincarnated to become a Saint candidate.








Finally, the last person on the list is the biggest of my problems. Natsume, now known as Hugo, seems to be my enemy. Not like the others, either. The petty jealousy of the other children cannot compare to the raw hostility that Hugo shows me. When he looks at me, you can see an undercurrent of raw killing intent churning within his gaze.

I have no idea what could have possibly caused him to be so hostile towards me. Regardless of whether I know it or not, at this rate I know that something is bound to happen. Before long, he is going to do *something*. That's what I fear.

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096I think, therefore I am; I move, therefore I am; I am, and I am the I who I am, therefore I am.

I'm A Spider, So What? – 096

I think, therefore I am; I move, therefore I am; I am, and I am the I who I am, therefore I am.

Some time has passed since I leveled up. I've been focusing a lot on straining my vision as far as it can possibly go, but I just can't push Enhanced Vision past level nine. I guess it really is hard to get a skill past level nine, after all. The rest of my skills are doing great, though!

First off, Silence is now level three. You did it, little spider, you're even sneakier!

Next, Accelerated Thought and Foresight have both hit level five. You did it, little spider, you're even dodgier!

Fire Resistance has, at long, long last, gone up another level to level three. Thanks to Patience, I know I should be getting resistance skills more quickly, but even so this still feels like it's taking forever. *Man*, I'm weak to fire. Even after I changed species, I'm still weak to fire, huh? I wonder if any of my other weaknesses changed at all, though... I can't really test any of them out right now, though, so I can't really say anything else about it.

Well, my old defense stat was garbage anyway, so even if my resistances have changed it's not like they could have gotten any wooorse... Although, since my defense stat has finally started to go up, maybe I really should be worried about my resistances. There might be some other attribute that I'm weak against. I don't have any good ways to test it, though...

So, next is Multitasking. That hit level ten, then evolved into a new skill: Multiple Wills. Now *this* is interesting. Just like the name implies, the number of consciousnesses in my brain has actually increased. With Multitasking, even though I could focus on more than one task at once, it was all being juggled by the same consciousness. Multiple Wills, though, splits my entire brain in two. It's something like having a split personality. Both personalities, though, are me; I'm just able to have two entirely different trains of thought going at the same time now. On top of that, both consciousnesses have the full benefit of Multitasking, so it's like my cognitive abilities have just straight-up doubled. *Super* convenient. I'm betting that leveling this up will give me even more consciousnesses.

However, only one consciousness can actually move my body. Since that's the case, I'm using one consciousness to move my body, and the other to handle processing information from Appraisal and Detection. So, I'm counting on you, Captain Body! Leave it to me, Captain Brain! ...It's possible now for me to have conversations with myself like this. Since both personalities are still me, though, we already share information perfectly.

There's no main or sub-personality here. Both are me. I am me, for me, by me! ...Yep, I've lost me entirely. Like, if I start asking these kinds of questions, then the definition of what counts as a person's sense of self starts to get pretty blurry. Maybe the distinction is just lost on me, since I can't even decide which personality is the main one. Maybe, indeed... Speaking of which, maybe I'm actually kind of special for being able to master this skill and use it so normally? Probably not, though.

While Captain Brain was contemplating philosophy, Captain Body defeated a monster. Good job, me! Oh, no, you flatter me.

This time, I tried using my new Decaying Attack, but there's no waaaay I can actually use it. Well, no, that's not to say that it isn't amazing. It's actually *massively* powerful. It's only level one, and it's still somehow this amazing. Too amazing, in fact.

Because, y'know, it turned that monster into compost with a single hit, right?

That's strange, right? Was that what "decay" meant, all this time? Rotting? Decomposing? This amount of decay is way more powerful than just rotting,

though. This is death's unstoppable advance, baked into an attribute. It's terrifying! Even at level one, it's massively overkill. What the heck is going to happen when I level it up?

That said, I *did* mention that there's no way I'd be able to use it. There's two reasons for that. First off, there's not much of a corpse left after the fact, which means that there's nothing left for me to eat. Using this to farm experience points would be absolutely amazing, but if I do that I'm only getting half of what I really wanted out of my monster hunting down here. I can't stomach that. Literally and figuratively, can't stomach that.

The other problem, though, is waaaay worse: when I use it, I take damage too.

Take a look at the sickle I used for my test. The edge of it is all tattered and worn-out. I lost health, too! Isn't this attack suicidal?! So, even though it's hugely powerful, there's a huge amount of backlash, too. In a tense, heated battle where I'm forced to fight with my fullest strength I might use it as a last resort, but apart from that I'm not going to touch it. Certainly not for cleaning up these small fry. *Especially* not here in the middle strata, where my passive health recovery is so slow.

Aaaargh, when is this sickle going to get fixed?! I think I'm going to level up soon, so it'll fix itself when that happens, but until then I'm going to be down a sickle for my next fights. Ah well, I've been using Poison Synthesis a lot more than my sickles, so it's not going to make a whole lot of difference unless I wind up fighting another eel, or maybe some other powerful foe.

In the first place, I only just started fighting with my sickles recently. My main weapon in these middle strata is still Poison Synthesis. After all, monsters start taking damage the instant they come into contact with it. If I were using my sickles more, I'd be getting a bunch of proficiency towards Slashing Attack, but doing that puts me in a perfect position to take a bunch of damage.

Plus, if I slash something open, then all of its guts fall out onto the ground, making everything harder to eat.

Well then, Captain Body: find some more prey! Roger that, Captain Brain, seeking targets now.

Maaaaan, Multiple Wills really is ludicrously convenient. If I manage to get

myself a second body, I can finally make Shadow Clones¹, right? Ah, but if I do that, they're both going to be my real body, so if either of them gets hit it's going to be painful. Aaaaah, that would suuuuck... I mean, I'd still survive if one of my two bodies was slain, but that still means I'd experience something very much like dying, right? Yeaaaah. I do nooooot want to find out what that feels like. I've technically experienced dying once already, but I have no memory of that at all so it doesn't count.


Captain Body, you heard all that, right? Please try extra hard not to die, okay? Whoa, whoa, Captain Brain, you totally didn't need to remind me at all.













Yeaaaah.






Translator's notes from this chapter:

1. A technique used in the manga Naruto, where the user creates physical duplicates of themselves.

[prev](#) • [next](#)

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097The Eight-Eyed One

I'm A Spider, So What? – 097

The Eight-Eyed One

“Proficiency requirements met. Your skill, [Enhanced Vision (LV 9)] has been raised to level 10. Your [Enhanced Vision] skill has reached its maximum level, and a new skill, [Telescopic Sight (LV 1)] has been unlocked.”

Woohoo! Finally, Enhanced Vision hit its level cap. It looks like my reward for that is a derived skill, huh? Let's not waste any time checking this out. Lady Appraisal?

***Telescopic Sight:** Allows the user to visually magnify distant images.*

Aaaah, it does exactly what it saaaays... Hmmmm. I dunno about this. My sensory-boosting skills are all plain, straightforward bonuses, and this derived skill is also pretty boring. I guess for now we should try testing this out...

Captain Body, activate Telescopic Sight!
Request acknowledged, Captain Brain!

Oh? Ohh?! OOHHHH?! Oh man, this is awesome! I'm sorry I called you boring!

Simultaneously overlaid on each other, I see both the images from my original field of view and the magnified image of Telescopic Sight. I was thinking that this was going to zoom in my entire field of vision at once, but it looks like I can activate it with one eye at a time. Ordinarily, having these two different fields of vision active simultaneously seems like it would be unusably chaotic, but, hey, there's two of me! Split the work up, and it's no problem at all.

Right now, my skill level is pretty low, so the magnification level I'm getting is pretty low and the effective range is pretty short, but once I start leveling this up

it's going to start being super useful. For example, if Detection alerts me to a nearby enemy, I can use Telescopic Sight to keep an eye on it at a distance while still being able to see everything else normally. Yeah, yeah! And just like all of my other passive skills, this isn't consuming any mana at all. I can think of a lot of uses for this skill, so I'm going to add this to the list of skills I always keep activated in the background for leveling purposes.

It's not good to get too excited, though, Captain Brain.

What's up, Captain Body?

I've been looking around with Telescopic Sight, and I found an enemy off in the distance.

Oh! I just got it, and it's already so useful!

Shall I go kill it immediately?

That goes without saying!

Aye-aye, sir!

Just like that, I sneakily creep up to my target. My sickle is still too damaged to use after that Decaying Attack suicide strike, so I use Poison Synthesis and dump some Deadly Spider Venom on my target. In a heartbeat, all of its health evaporates. As always, this is a great and terrible power.

“Experience requirements met. Zoa Ere, you have grown from level 2 to level 3. Every ability score has been increased. Acquired bonus skill proficiencies from leveling up: your skill [Visible Spectrum Expansion (LV 2)] has been raised to level 3 and your skill [Vitality (LV 9)] has been raised to level 10. Your [Vitality] skill has reached its maximum level and has evolved into a new skill, [Greater Vitality (LV 1)]. You have acquired additional skill points.”

Oh, perfect timing on that level up! Molting repaired my sickle. On top of that, one of my stat-boosting skills evolved, huh! Let's Appraise it real quick.

Greater Vitality: Increases HP based on ten times the skill level. In addition, when leveling up, provides an additional increase to HP based on the skill level.

Just like I thought, it's basically the same thing as Greater Strength. So that means that evolving the rest of my stat-boosting skills is going to give me that bonus stat increase when I level, right? I really want to crank those out as

quickly as I can, but I really am going to need to be patient and wait until I get out of the middle strata first... I really want to get someplace safe, and fast.

Also, I've been waiting for this! With this level-up, I finally have a hundred skill points! Yay! Now then, have these rumored Evil Eye-type skills made their appearance?!

Evil Eye of Curses (100): Applies Curse-attributed damage to things within the user's field of view.

Evil Eye of Destruction (100): Applies Decay-attributed damage to things within the user's field of view.

Evil Eye of Paralysis (100): Applies Paralysis-attributed damage to things within the user's field of view.

Evil Eye of Petrification (100): Applies Petrification-attributed damage to things within the user's field of view.

Evil Eye of Disquiet (100): Applies the Corruption Magic spell "Disquiet" to things within the user's field of view.

Evil Eye of Phantom Pain (100): Applies the Corruption Magic spell "Phantom Pain" to things within the user's field of view.

Evil Eye of Madness (100): Applies the Corruption Magic spell "Madness" to things within the user's field of view.

Evil Eye of Fascination (100): Applies the Corruption Magic spell "Fascination" to things within the user's field of view.

Evil Eye of Hypnotism (100): Applies the Corruption Magic spell "Hypnotism" to things within the user's field of view.

Evil Eye of Dread (100): Applies the Corruption Magic spell "Dread" to things within the user's field of view.

Whoa. They really did appear. These skills definitely weren't in the list before now. And there's so many of them, too, but I have to only pick one! How do I decide?

Captain Brain, a moment?

What is it, Captain Body?

Can't we pick more than just one?

Eh? How would we do that?

You do know that we have eight eyes, right?

Right, and...?

So, that means that we can have eight Evil Eyes at once, right?

...?! I'm a genius!!

Heh heh heh. That is correct: I am indeed a genius!

Seriously, I'm a genius! And, since I'm a genius, that means that everything I do is perfect!

That's right! Having eight simultaneous Evil Eyes going is going to be amazing, right?

Oh maaaaan. Seriously, oh maaaaan. My dreams are getting waaaay too big right now!

If we're using one eye for Telescopic Sight, that only leaves seven free, though. And if we want to keep a normal field of view, then that means we're down to six, huh?

You're right. This time we're picking one, and we'll get five more as we save up the skill points. Sound good?

Sounds perfect. So, Captain Body, which Evil Eye do you think is the best?

I think we should pick the Curse one, since we don't have access to that attribute yet. Let's hold off on the corruption-based ones, they seem like they'd be better used against people instead of monsters.

Yeah, I agree... though do I really prefer the Curse one? In the upper strata we did fight that petrification lizard, but making a Petrification eye effective might take a while...

Yeah, but once we get it up high enough, it'll be really strong. I still think we should play it safe, though, and get the Curse one.

Just what I'd expect from me, you really have your stuff together.

I know, right?

So, without further ado, let's pick up the Evil Eye of Curses.


Curse: *Weakens all of the recipient's ability scores while damaging their HP, MP, and SP.*











Translator's notes for this chapter:

1. The title is in reference to "The Three-Eyed One", an Osamu Tezuka manga.

[prev](#) • [next](#)

- 17 June 2016

- [#kumoko#kumo desu ga nani ka](#)
- 
- [9](#)

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098Look into my eyes!!

I'm A Spider, So What? – 098

Look into my eyes!!

I just got the Evil Eye of Curses at level one~! Hooray~! I finally managed to get it, but if I want to know what this actually does, I'm going to need to look around here for a monster I can use as a proper lab rat. So, then, let's dig through Detection's data and try to find something that might work.

Hmm. Hmmmm... It looks like there might be something over there, huh... It's just barely on the edge of my range, so I can't get much data about it, but it looks like it's something up on solid ground. That's perfect! So nice of it to volunteer.

Elro Geafrog — LV 4
Statistics:

HP: 85/85 (green)
MP: 75/75 (blue)
SP: 68/68 (yellow), 68/68 (red)
Avg. Offense: 67
Avg. Defense: 59
Avg. Magic Power: 46
Avg. Resistance: 46
Avg. Speed: 43

Skills:

[Poison Synthesis (LV 3)] • [Acid Attack (LV 3)] • [Shooting (LV 4)] •
[Swimming (LV 2)] • [Night Vision (LV 7)] •
[Poison Resistance (LV 2)] • [Acid Resistance (LV 2)] •
[Heat Nullification]

Ah, it's the frog's evolved form. At least, it certainly does look like the evolved

form of those frogs I fought so long ago. How nostalgic! It doesn't really seem like it's gotten much stronger, but I think it looks like it's evolved somewhat to match its environment. It's got Heat Nullification, after all.

Also, it has levels in Night Vision despite the fact that it's living in an area brightly lit by magma, which makes me think that it's evolved from something that came from the upper strata. The upper and lower strata are pitch black, after all. If something from the upper strata got lost and found itself down here in the middle strata, it would be basically mandatory for it to evolve to fit this climate. If something from the lower strata came up here... well, I'd rather that didn't happen. The thought of a monster from the lower strata somehow evolving to adapt itself to the middle strata is waaaay too dreadful.

Now that I'm looking at this frog's spit attack, though, it looks like what I thought was a spit attack might have actually been the same Poison Synthesis skill that I use, launched with that Shooting skill. Maaaan, that there's a good skill. I want it too. If I did, I'd have a poison bullet that that frog's acid wouldn't even hold a candle to. I wonder if I can grind out skill proficiency by firing silk out of my butt as hard as I can...?

While Captain Brain ponders that kind of useless garbage, *I* get to work. Step one: synthesize Weak Poison with every single damage slider at its minimum, plus the paralysis attribute. This frog has a couple levels of Poison Resistance, so I don't think this will be enough to kill it. I sneak up close behind the frog and synthesize my poison. Alright, the frog's ready for experimentation!

Ah, Captain Body, good job! Now I can experiment on this thing to my heart's content. Now then: Evil Eye, Activate!

Alright, turning that on was no problem at all. Now, what does this look like?

Oh... oh. The frog's health, mana, and stamina are all slowly, slowly decreasing. I guess it is level one, after all, so the rate of damage it can put out is going to be pretty slow. Both the frog's yellow and red stamina gauges are emptying out, but since the yellow bar recovers pretty quickly this isn't really doing much of anything. If I level it up, then the damage will be high enough that it'll start outpacing regeneration, right? If that's the case, then I'll be able to make someone short of breath with a glare, huh... That's pretty heartless. Ah! Except, they'll probably run out of health and die first. It looks like I'm damaging health

and stamina at about the same rates, after all...

Oh! Its *stats* are going down too! There's little numbers next to each stat showing how many points each one's been decreased by. Next to that, there's another number in parentheses showing me what those values are usually like at their maximum.

Oho! So, if I eat a status-debuffing attack, it'll be printed out like this, huh? I'll be able to notice that after I take a single hit. As expected of the lady Appraisal, she doesn't miss a single beat.

It looks like my Evil Eye isn't a passive skill like all of the other cool ones have been as of late. It's sucking away at my mana... although, it's not using very much of it at all. It's ticking down at a rate of maybe one point per ten seconds. The frog's taking one point of damage every five seconds, so maybe the conversion rate isn't really all that bad? If you think about how much mana I have right now, it looks like I can keep this up for over fifty minutes, so if I think about it like that then it looks like this isn't really that inefficient. Once I level it up, it'll probably start doing more damage, faster.

Ah! The frog's paralysis looks like it's wearing off... oh! Just as I started thinking that, Captain Body dropped some more paralytic poison on it. As is only natural for me: I can support myself lightning quick.

Hmmmm. The health and mana damage is pretty good, but the stat damage isn't really very good. At the start, the frog's stats went down at about the same rate that its health was getting depleted, but now that it's hit the halfway mark it's barely going down at all anymore. Huh, is there a limit to how much stats can be lowered? I mean, it kinda makes sense if you think about it. If it kept decreasing, then at some point the target's defense stat would hit zero. You can't even call that a paper-thin defense. That's basically just having a really feeble body.

However, dropping someone's stats by half is still a pretty huge deal. It doesn't really make a huge ton of a difference if I debuff a small fry like this frog, but if I can cut the stats of a strong monster like an eel down to half... Most of the monsters I've seen tend to rely far more on their stats than their skills, so weakening their stats is effectively a drastic weakening of the monster itself. If I slash an eel's stats in half, then there wouldn't be much difference between it and a catfish anymore.

It looks like I've gained an anti-strong-monster trump card! I guess I've got to put a lot of effort into leveling this skill in the near future.

Hm? Uhh, what? The frog *died*?! Whaaaat? I thought it had plenty of health left, though...? Its health started dropping super quickly for some reason, but why? ...Ah! Before its health ran out, its red stamina gauge emptied out. Ahhhh, is that what that was... if your red stamina runs out, then you rapidly start losing your health. That's terrifying!


...Whoa. Evolving just started looking waaaay more dangerous. I'm so glad that I had plenty of food every time I did that. Man, I'm going to have to keep an eye on that, even if I think that Overeating is going to keep my stamina full for quite some time.






In any event, the Evil Eye of Curses seems to actually be pretty useful. Whenever I've got a bunch of excess mana, I should keep it running so that I can grind out some skill proficiency for it, right...? Yeah. I'm going to make sure that my mana pool is always at least half full, just in case anything happens, but I'm going to allocate the other half of it to working on grinding out my Evil Eye. This is a skill I can work on leveling while I'm on the move, too.








Translator's notes for this chapter:

1. The title *COULD* be a reference to Ghost Rider's quote in *Ultimate Marvel vs. Capcom 3* when he hits his level 3 super, *Penance Stare*.

[prev](#) • [next](#)

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- 
- [11](#)

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099 That girl's an idiot, so I've got to be the responsible one.

I'm A Spider, So What? – 099

That girl's an idiot, so I've got to be the responsible one.

Translator's note: I'm changing it back to Captain.

I am a body. As yet, I have no name.¹

I'd like to take this moment to complain a little bit about Captain Brain.

That girl is an *idiot*.

Just now, she decided she wanted to try to work on learning the Shooting skill, so she was all “oh man let's fire a bunch of silk out of my butt!”, but then when I tried it the silk got launched way, way farther than she thought it was going to. It landed in the magma. I nearly caught on fire! If I hadn't acted immediately to disconnect the rest of that strand from myself, then fire would have raced up the silk and set me ablaze.

So she keeps coming up with fundamentally useless proposals like that, and then when we try them out they wind up being, well, fundamentally useless. None of the experiments that she's been getting really excited about have ever been even remotely successful. Well, to be honest, I'm also always super excited to try these things out; they are my own ideas, after all. Really, couldn't she come up with anything a little bit more, well, normal?

If you bother thinking about any of these things for more than a second, it's pretty darn obvious that they're all worthless, you know? She's in charge of the brain! Shouldn't she be carefully thinking these through? She's an idiot, right? Yeah! She's an idiot!

So, as the unfortunate soul in charge of this body, it's my job to be the responsible one. After all, it's ultimately *my* actions that keep the delicate balance between life and death.

Captain Body, Captain Body!

What is it, Captain Brain?

Can we stick an Evil Eye on Telescopic Sight?

...?! Are you a genius?!

Oh hoh hoh. Yes! I am indeed a genius!

Whoa, seriously? I've been a genius this whole time! And since I'm a genius, that means everything I do is forgiven!

Of course, of course! If we funnel an Evil Eye through Telescopic Sight, that means we can use it at extremely long ranges, right? Isn't that amazing?

Oh yeah. Oh yeaaaah. That's seriously amazing. The possibilities are limitless!

So, let's get out there and find ourselves a target!

Yah-HA!

I am a brain. As of yet, I have no name.

Simultaneously activating Telescopic Sight and my Evil Eye is not going so well. Urgh. I guess if I could, it really would be OP as heck, so I guess I can't complain... Telescopic Sight has leveled all the way up to level five, thanks to constantly having it on. Compared to how it was at level one, I can not only see much farther with it, but the maximum magnification is also quite a bit better. If I were to be able to channel my Evil Eye through it, I'd have a really long-range attack at my disposal. What a shame.

Even so, this Evil Eye really is useful. I've been keeping it on whenever I have the spare mana for it, and by now it's hit level three. This one's slow as heck. However, blitzing my way through this middle strata is leaving me with a huge surplus of mana, so this is still great timing.

Another thing I noticed while I had Evil Eye up: for whatever reason, it doesn't actually change my field of view. I can't have it up at the same time as Telescopic Sight, but Enhanced Vision and the rest of my vision-boosting skills seem to fit into it just fine. Since I don't need to worry about restricting my field of view, it looks like I don't need to specifically reserve any of my other eyes to still be able to see.

This, of course, means that I can do what I only dreamed about doing: eight simultaneous Evil Eyes.

Also, it looks like I can't actually use any of my attribute attack skills to boost my Evil Eye. I tried tying my Greater Poison Attack skill into it, but it didn't seem to have any effect. What a pity. Well, I guess being able to do something like that would be just about as OP as being able to use Telescopic Sight for a long-ranged attack, so I guess it's only natural. If I were able to put my Deadly Spider Venom into my Evil Eye, then I'd be able to kill with a single glance of my deep blue mystic eyes that could perceive even death.² I already have eyes that can weaken and damage something just by glaring at it, though, which is plenty OP enough. Wishing for more is just greedy.

Next, I started wondering if it might be a great idea to try activating the Evil Eye of Curses in all eight of my eyes, and it looks like I actually can! It just doesn't actually have any extra effect. I kind of assumed that using eight eyes at once would give me eight times the power, but of course it isn't as simple as that.

However, I did discover that I can instead activate Telescopic Sight in more than one eye, which is extremely useful! Now I can pick out a bunch of different distant places to simultaneously magnify, which could be extremely useful depending on how I wound up using it.

So, allow me to change the subject for a bit. I need to tell you something about Captain Body.

That girl is an *idiot*.

A little while ago, I thought that I might be able to get the Shooting skill on my own by firing silk out of my butt as hard as I can. Captain Body then immediately said "oh maaaaan, that's a great idea, I'm gonna try that right now!" and proceeded to launch a bunch of silk immediately.

Right at the magma.

Sure, she may have waved it away by saying "wow, that flew way further than I thought it would", but even so I really would have preferred that she aimed it anywhere but the nearest magma patch. The silk all fell into the magma, of course, and immediately caught fire. The flame raced up the silk like a fuse,

right towards my butt, which would have caught fire too (again!) if Captain Body hadn't managed to cut it off at the very last second.

So I keep coming up with brilliant ideas like that, and she keeps managing to somehow take them in an entirely different direction. The wrong direction. Man, seriously, no matter how much of my genius I pour into these brilliant ideas, Captain Body manages to completely wreck them with her massive incompetence.

If you bother thinking about any of these things for more than a second, it's pretty darn obvious that she's going about them all wrong, you know? She's in charge of the body! Did all that moving around make her into a stupid muscle-head? She's an idiot, right? Yeah! She's an idiot!

So, as the unfortunate soul in charge of this body, it's my job to be the responsible one. After all, it's ultimately *my* ideas that keep the delicate balance between life and death.

Captain Brain, Captain Brain!

What is it, Captain Body?

I was looking around with Telescopic Sight and I found a monster in the distance.

Seriously?! Wow, that's way outside Detection's range, even.

Heh heh heh. Why, Captain Brain, wouldn't this mean that your reason for existence is that much less relevant?

Don't get ahead of yourself, Captain Body. Did you think you could match my raw informational throughput? You'd need a hundred eyes to even come close!

Muahaha, go ahead, say that while you still can! Soon, you'll see!

Heh. Soon? Never. But, fine! Try and struggle towards this lofty peak!

Heh heh heh.

Ahahaha.

So, what should we do?

Hunt that thing down, of course.


Aye aye, sir! You there, scoundrel! Prepare yourself!













Yah-HA!

Translator's notes for this chapter:

1. This is a reference to the opening lines of “I Am a Cat”, a famous Japanese novel. This same reference was used in Chapter 3.
 2. This is a reference to the Mystic Eyes of Death Perception, an ability used by the protagonists of Tsukihime and Kara no Kyoukai.
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- 
- [11](#)

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100Huh? Lady Appraisal is...?

I'm A Spider, So What? – 100

Huh? Lady Appraisal is...?

Today is yet another day of wandering about the middle strata. Hmmmm. It's been a long freaking time since I first got here, but the end still isn't in sight. As expected of the world's greatest labyrinth. This is the kind of dungeon that you'd have to be willing to dedicate your whole life to exploring if you wanted to make it through, isn't it?

“Proficiency requirements met. Your skill, [Appraisal (LV 9)] has been raised to level 10.”

Oh? Ohhhh?! OHHHHHHHHH?!?!

Finally. *FINALLY!* Appraisal has hit max level!! I'm ludicrously happy right now! The first skill I ever picked, my constant companion through fair and fowl, has *finally* reached its most perfect form!

Appraisal, who was good for nothing at all when I first met her, whose improvements were subtle, but steady, with each new level, who became more and more useful with each passing day, who was finally revealed as the talented Miss Appraisal, who tirelessly worked without complaint to better herself, who finally became a shining Lady that none could deny... Appraisal, you've finally, *finally!!*

Woooo! You've done a great job. You've done a fantastic job. I'm moved to tears! Thank you, Lady Appraisal! *Thank you!* Our future together will be bright!

But... there's no evolution, no evolved skill, huh... I mean, I guess that's fine. Appraisal hitting max level is still super huge. I really wanted some sort of awesome skill, though, something that would make me lord of all knowledge,

ruler of all wisdom... But that's not going to happen, huh... I thought that if anyone could do it, Lady Appraisal could, but I guess that's not going to happen...

...Is it seriously not going to happen?

“fzzt...,fzzzzzffssshhh, ...zzsh, zhss...shaazh, zhassshh,”

...What the? What's that bad TV static sound?

“fzzzsh, ...zzfrequest ackzzsshzt, zzt, fsstequires root administrative privilzzsshhtz,”

Uh? What the hell?!

“fsszzaat, zzshstrator Sariezzzvsht....., ...zzat, tzzejected. Escalasszzzvt...”

This seems kind of bad. I don't know what's bad about it, but this seems bad.

“Fzzt.....” BING!!

Compared to the unintelligible static that I was straining to hear, the crystal-clear ping that suddenly burst through my skull was so loud that I flinched, hard.

“Request acknowledged by root-level systems administrator D. Now constructing supplementary skill, [Wisdom]... ...Construction complete.”

**“Requirements met have been met. You have gained the skill [Wisdom].”
Your existing skills, [Appraisal (LV 10)] and [Detection (LV 10)], have been integrated with your new skill, [Wisdom].“**

“Proficiency requirements met. Your skill, [Taboo (LV 7)] has been raised to level 8.”

**“Requirements have been met. You have earned the title [Lord of Wisdom], and have been awarded the skills [Ultimate Magic] and [Celestial Power].
Your existing skills, [Accelerated MP Recovery (LV 4)] and [MP Consumption Reduction (LV 3)], have been integrated with your new skill, [Ultimate Magic]. Your existing skills, [Mana Pool (LV 9)] and [Resistance**

(LV 4)], have been integrated with your new skill, [Celestial Power].”

Huh?

Huh?!

HUUUUH?!

Wait, wait. This is weird. This is, of course, really, really weird, in a lot of different ways. What just happened? *Why* did it happen? What do I do now?!

I’ve got to calm down. Captain Body, deep, slow breaths, please.

Inhale, inhale, exhaaaale...

Right. Let’s tackle these in order.

First thing that happened was that I started hearing some largely-unintelligible noise. What was that? I have no clue. Usually when I hit something I have literally no clue about, I put it aside because there’s no sense in wasting time worrying. This time, though, I don’t really think I can get away with that. This is, after all, *really* obviously abnormal.

Abnormal? Yes, abnormal. Up until this point, I’ve just been kind of accepting that this world has skills and stats and so on, but in Japan those things just flat-out didn’t exist. If I were in Japan right now, I’d be thinking that these skills were extremely freaking abnormal. I, however, just kind of brushed that under the rug, thinking “oh, this is just that kind of world”, but was it really okay for me to take it so lightly?

Until now, it was. Now, however, things are a little bit different. The “Voice of Heaven” said something very peculiar.

“Request acknowledged by root-level systems administrator D. Now constructing supplementary skill, [Wisdom]... ...Construction complete.”

Based on this, it looks like **someone is keeping me under observation**, and **that person heard my grumbling**, and then **they made a new skill for me**, right?

If that’s the case, then the culprit is this so-called “root-level systems administrator D”. On top of that, if you think about the fact that he’s got “root-level” in his title, then there might be other, lower-ranking administrators, too.

So, these administrators, what the heck do they administer? That, at least, is obvious. Skills. That is the inevitable, undeniable conclusion of this train of thought. In other words: **the skills in this world are granted by these beings called “administrators”**.

Why? How? Heck if I know. I can only say one thing for certain:


There’s something weird about this world.












Chills are running down my nonexistent spine. The fear that’s slowly creeping in on me is not the bright, urgent terror that blasted through me when I encountered the Earth Dragons and my mother. No, this is a darker fear, a deep dread that erodes away at my sanity.



These administrators... are they watching me right now, as I cower on the dungeon floor? Are they laughing their dark, grim laughs at my fear? This entire situation is terrifying. My skills, these things that I have relied on so hard for my very survival, are suddenly strange and unknowable. What am I going to do?

What am I going to do?!

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- 1 July 2016
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- 
- [12](#)

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